



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC
OF GUYANA

OFFICIAL REPORT

*PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FIRST SESSION
(2020-2022) OF THE TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION
OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE DOME OF THE ARTHUR
CHUNG CONFERENCE CENTRE, LILIENDAAL, GREATER GEORGETOWN*

44TH Sitting

Wednesday, 9TH February, 2022

**PARLIAMENT OFFICE
HANSARD DIVISION**

Assembly convened at 10.36 a.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Apology for Late Start

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, let me apologise for the late start this morning.

Birthday Greetings to Members

On a happier note, on your behalf and on my own behalf, I extend best of birthday wishes to the Hon. Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance. Also, very similar wishes to the Hon. Member, Ms. Sheila Veerasammy. Thank you very much.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2022

WHEREAS the Constitution of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana requires that Estimates of the Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for any financial year should be laid before the National Assembly and that, when the Estimates of Expenditure have been approved by the Assembly, an Appropriation Bill shall be introduced in the Assembly providing for the issue from the Consolidated Fund of the sums necessary to meet that expenditure;

AND WHEREAS the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana for the financial year 2022 have been prepared and laid before the Assembly on January 26, 2022, as summarised in the attached Schedule 1;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution requires that the expenditure of each of the Constitutional Agencies listed in the Third Schedule of the Constitution be financed as a

direct charge on the Consolidated Fund determined as a lump sum by way of an annual subvention approved by the National Assembly after a review and approval of the Constitutional Agency's annual budget as a part of the process of the determination of the national budget;

AND WHEREAS the Fiscal Management and Accountability Act, Cap. 73 :02, requires that the annual lump sum subvention recommended by the Minister with Responsibility for Finance for each Constitutional Agency be included in the annual budget proposal for approval by the National Assembly;

AND WHEREAS the Minister with Responsibility for Finance recommends lump sum subventions for each Constitutional Agency for the financial year 2022 as summarised in the attached Schedule 2;

AND WHEREAS the Natural Resource Fund Act 2021 provides that the amount that the Minister with Responsibility for Finance shall request the National Assembly to approve, and the amount that the National Assembly shall approve, as the withdrawal from the Fund for the next ensuing fiscal year shall be included in the annual budget proposal and shall not exceed, for that year, the ceiling calculated in accordance with the said Act:

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2022, of a total sum of five hundred and one billion, six hundred and seventy-eight million, two hundred and ninety-eight thousand dollars (\$501,678,298,000) excluding fifty one billion, two hundred and fifty-five million, and four hundred and twenty thousand dollars (\$51,255,420,000) which is chargeable by law, as detailed therein and summarised in Schedule 1, and agree that it is expedient to amend the law and to make further provision in respect of finance;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That the National Assembly approves the recommended lump sum subvention for each Constitutional Agency for the financial year 2022 as stated in Schedule 2, amounting to a total sum of eleven billion, seven hundred and twenty-nine million, eight hundred and forty

thousand dollars (\$11,729,840,000) which is charged upon the Consolidated Fund by the Constitution and for the sums voted for the Constitutional Agencies to form part of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditures of Guyana for the financial year 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

That this National Assembly approves the sum of \$126,694,310,000, equivalent to US \$607,646,570.98, to be withdrawn from the Natural Resource Fund for the financial year 2022 in accordance with the Natural Resource Fund Act 2021.

[Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 2022.

Assembly in Committee of Supply

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Members. We are now in Committee of Supply to begin the first agency on day three of this consideration. I invite the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Hon. Member, Mr. Nigel Dharamlall, and his team to join us.

Today, we are starting at 10.39 a.m. There are no time savings from previous heads, so we are on a fresh page with zero balances. The clock starts running at 10.40 a.m. As we did towards the latter part of yesterday's interrogation, we will take all of the current expenditure and then the capital.

Agency: 13 Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development

Current Expenditure

Programme: 131 – Policy Development and Administration - \$363,872,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Before I begin, let me join with you, on behalf of the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance for Change (APNU/AFC), and I would also like to include my Opposition colleague, Mr. Shuman, in extending birthday greetings to the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, Dr. Ashni Kumar Singh, and also to the Hon. Member, Ms. Sheila Veerasammy, on the celebration of their... Well, in Hind terms, we would say *janmadin mubaarak*, happy birthday, guys.

I turn your attention to line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I see that there is an increase from 18 to 23. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to please indicate the designations of the five members who were added to his staff compliment under this line item.

Minister of Local Government and Regional Development [Mr. Dharamlall]: The five new contracted employees are: a Confidential Secretary, a Clerk II, an Accounts Clerk II, a Personal Assistant and a Typist Clerk.

Mr. Mahipaul: The increase from 18 to 23 is five. When I look at the sum of money that is increased there, I see that it has moved from \$50.305 million to \$88.278 million, a difference of \$37,973,000. I also divided that by five and further divided it by 12, which gave me something around more than \$600,000 per month. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to inform us if the Advisor to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development is captured under this line item and, if Advisors are captured, may I ask how many Advisors?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy that Mr. Mahipaul asked that question. There are a number of reasons that figure has moved from more than \$50 million to \$88 million. Reason number one is that part of our mandate as a Government is to make sure that public servants get proper remuneration, which is quite unlike what happened in the past. What you will find is that the increase is not for five employees alone; it is for all 23 employees.

Mr. Mahipaul: I guess I have to restructure my question so that the Hon. Minister could comprehend it better. Does this line item cater for Advisors to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and, if so, how many Advisors?

Mr. Dharamlall: One Advisor.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am aware, and this entire House is aware, due to public knowledge, that that Advisor is the Hon. Member, Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj. You did say that we must not call the names of persons who are not in the House to defend themselves. The Hon. Mr. Seeraj is a sitting Member, so he is in the House. I think I am allowed, on the basis of him being in the House, to call his name. May I ask if the Hon. Minister would be kind enough to inform this House, and the nation at large, about the entire remuneration package of the Hon. Dharamkumar Seeraj?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, before you go, while the Hon. Member, Mr. Seeraj, is in the House, we have a standing position that we observe with respect to the name of a person and the particulars of their engagement. We do not allow it. We could deal with positions and salary. You may go ahead, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am happy for that clarification, because as Mr. Mahipaul would know...

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member...

Mr. Dharamlall: ...there were other Advisors in the former Government who are also in this House. If I am permitted to mention, Mr. Devin Sears, who is over there, was an Advisor; Mr. Jermaine Figueira, who is across there, was also an Advisor. There were other Advisors and they were earning... I do not know because, as Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, they were allocated advisory positions in my sector. I can tell you that we have not seen an iota... As a matter of fact, I have not seen any I's dotted by any one of these Advisors that the APNU/AFC had in its Government.

Funnily, they were not just Advisors alone, because they were earning in many other capacities in the Government. If Mr. Mahipaul would like full disclosure, then we must also disclose what happened during the five years of the APNU/AFC. Mr. Mahipaul himself was also one of the beneficiaries of the last Government even with him being a public servant. I could tell you that, when I became Minister of Local Government and Regional Development... [**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** Answer the question.] I am answering the question, am I not? When I became Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Mahipaul was a Community Development Officer (CDO)...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Mr. Dharamlall: My apologies, Mr. Chairman. It is the Hon. Member. The Hon. Mr. Mahipaul was a Community Development Officer in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. I could tell you that I have not seen Mr. Mahipaul one day to report what he had done or what he had intended to do during the five years and the few months that he had worked at the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. So, there must be full disclosure.

Indeed, Mr. Seeraj is an Advisor, and I think that he is doing a fantastic job. It is my prerogative to determine who are my Advisors, and it is my prerogative to get rid of those who were advising in the last Government who could not advise us. As a matter of fact, the Ministry also had... the former Minister had an Advisor, too, who was earning much more than what the Hon. Member, Mr. Seeraj, is earning, and has not done any single thing. Again, I have not seen... and Mr. Chairman, this is very serious. Government's business is serious, all right; very serious. [**Mr. Figueira:** *[Inaudible]*]. You were earning, but you were not producing. You yourself, Mr. Figueira, Hon. Member, earned hundreds of thousands of dollars per month, what...

Mr. Figueira: Mr. Chairman, I stand on a Point of Order.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, what is the Point of Order?

Mr. Figueira: Standing Order 41 (6).

Mr. Chairman: Yes.

Mr. Figueira: The Hon. Member is imputing negative motives towards me. I would rather he inform this House, if that is what he is desirous of doing. I do not mind because my hands are clean. Kindly say to this House what hundreds of thousands of dollars I would have made. The question is about Member Seeraj and for you to provide the House with the answer.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, this is not a question. You raised a Point of Order with respect to imputing negative characteristics with respect to you. Hon. Member, Minister Dharamlall, please do not impute. I would want to advise that you have well established a precedence with respect to hiring persons as Advisors who are in the Assembly. Thank you very much. You may want to consider doing some research to give a range of salaries that Advisors have had over the periods.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I actually have the figures at the top of my head.

Mr. Chairman: You may go ahead.

Mr. Dharamlall: If the Opposition would like full disclosure, then the people who support the Opposition must know that, as the Minister in whose custody the mandate is entrusted, I can say, without contradiction, that Hon. Member Mr. Figueira earned hundreds of thousands of dollars per

month and so did Mr. Devin Sears, and I have not seen any work of note or any evidence of any work that they would have done for the Ministry.

Mr. Figueira: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you may continue. Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, please have a seat.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to answer the question, too, that Mr. Seeraj is very competent, and that he is doing an extremely fantastic job in promoting the Ministry of Local Government.

10.51 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, I will give you an opportunity. The Hon. Minister said that he has seen that the Hon. Member, Mr. Figueira, earned hundreds of thousands and that he is yet to see the output of that work. You may have a minute to respond.

Mr. Figueira: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. If the Hon. Minister is claiming that I would have garnered hundreds of thousands of dollars, I would rather him provide the House with that information because it is Government's money. If the Hon. Minister is not in possession of the work that I would have done, that is not my fault. The Ministry has to provide the Minister with that information, not me. The question that the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, asked still exists. What is the remuneration of the Hon. Member?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please. I am not asking you to rehash what the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, said. If I get the Minister correctly, he did not say that you did not provide, he said that he is yet to see. 'You are saying' is not the same thing. We are all very good with words here.

Mr. Mahipaul: My understanding of how this works is that I ask the question as an Hon. Member in the Business Sub-Committee...

Mr. Chairman: Your understanding ...

Mr. Mahipaul: I am seeking clarification.

Mr. Chairman: You could raise your question based on your understanding. It is my understanding that I have the power to allow and disallow. Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: Very good. That is what I am getting at, Sir, and you allowed for the answer.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, now that we understand each other.

Mr. Mahipaul: We always do.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: The question I asked the Hon. Minister, who claims to be a President's College genius, is to provide this House with the salary and remuneration package...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have done well in two days. I never heard the Hon. Minister claim to be a President's College genius.

Hon. Members (Opposition): Yes.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, he said that to me many times.

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead. He said that he was a student.

Mr. Mahipaul: To my good Hon. Minister friend, who told me umpteen times that he is a President's College genius, I am simply asking him to provide, to this honourable House and the nation, the salary and remuneration package in total per month for the one Advisor who he claims is doing an excellent job. All I am looking for is a figure. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I am happy to hear that you have been a President's College genius. You could proceed with the answer.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I hear the hurt in the Hon. Member's voice that he did not have such an inculcation of ... The unfortunate thing about all of what President's College is about is that the People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R) Chairman ended up being a mortician, who also came from President's College. We have a mortician genius as...

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, on a Point of Order.

Mr. Chairman: What is the Point of Order?

Mr. Holder: Standing Order 41(6), he is imputing. I was never a mortician. In fact, the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), while I was working with the Government, placed me at the Suddie Regional Hospital, and it was a big laugh, instead of utilising my skills as an engineer. I was never employed as a mortician. He should withdraw that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member, in defending himself, says he has never been a mortician. Please withdraw that.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, thank you. I withdraw. What I know for a fact is that he was part of the technical team overseeing the mortuary. Mr. Chairman, I stand guided by you, but I do not believe that I should come publicly and say what the Advisor is earning. I have not read what the APNU/AFC, in five years I stood in Parliament when I was in Opposition... They had refused to say what the earnings of the Advisors were. If it is that Mr. Mahipaul would like to know what Mr. Seeraj's salary is, then I will suggest that he speak to Mr. Seeraj. Being both Hon. Members, they will share that information.

Mr. Mahipaul: Let me restructure the question.

Mr. Chairman: If you are going for the same question, we will get the same answer for the third time.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am going a different way.

Mr. Chairman: I ask that ...

Mr. Mahipaul: The Hon. Mr. Seeraj and I sit on the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). We are also Hon. Members of this distinguished House, and we interact a lot. I am guided that the Hon. Mr. Dharamkumar Seeraj, Advisor to the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, earns a salary of \$1.5 million per month. Could the Hon. Minister confirm that my figure is accurate? If it is inaccurate, would he be kind enough to provide us with the accurate figure? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: I believe that Mr. Mahipaul is working in a metal workshop; he is doing fabrication. Mr. Seeraj, as a public servant, is on the GS:14 scale, which is way less than the outrageous... But, of course, we had an Advisor on Parks in the last Government who was earning

nearly \$600,000 to \$700,000 per month. Again, we have a few here. We had a Petroleum Advisor from Region 5 who was protesting more than doing anything else and earning hundreds of thousands of dollars per month. Mr. Mahipaul, I believe that...

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member...

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Sorry. Yes, Mr. Mahipaul, Hon. Member, your fabrication in your question is very glaring. Please, as an Hon. Member, how could you come publicly and make something so outrageous about the salary of Mr. Seeraj, who you claim to be your friend. What manner of man are you to be doing so? He is at the GS:14 scale. I suspect that all of you know what the GS: 14 is.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. Hon. Members, because you go, Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, the GS:14 is in the book. We could all reference it. I heard, early this morning, a lot of unparliamentary words.

[Mr. Speaker displayed a document.]

Yesterday, I had to circulate this, with a personal note to persons who have been using them. So far, I have five persons on my list. I heard the person who used the word 'pathological' a few moments ago. I will send you one of the lists with my note. Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, you may continue.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I trust that I am not one of those five on the list that you have there.

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking if you are on the list or ...

Mr. Mahipaul: No. I trust that I am not.

Mr. Chairman: I notice a note was on your desk yesterday. You did not return. You were on virtually. I should have sent the note virtually.

Mr. Mahipaul: I was virtual

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Sir.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Cde. Chairman, it is clear that the Hon. Minister...

Mr. Chairman: You got it. Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much for your note. I notice that the Hon. Minister does not want to answer the question. In view of me hearing this number that I called just now – \$1.5 million – it is unfortunate that I am forced to believe it in view of the Minister not wanting to give us the figure in terms of the salary and remuneration package of the Advisor. May I ask, Sir...

Mr. Chairman: Just be careful how you are imputing because the Hon. Minister gave several answers, including finally saying that the salary is on scale is GS:14, which is way below what you said.

Mr. Mahipaul: I can be guided but, as a contracted employee, I am not so sure if GS: 14 has an upper cap. I believe and I am guided here that GS: 14 starts at a number and it goes to wherever, but that is the salary.

Mr. Chairman: It has a cap.

Mr. Mahipaul: I was talking about the entire package which includes allowances and other benefits. There is where I was guided that the figure is \$1.5 million, which includes the GS:14 plus all the other ...

Mr. Chairman: We are asking about salaries.

Mr. Mahipaul: I asked for the entire package, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: He is within his right to give the salary figure.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes. He did indicate that the scale of the salary is GS: 14. I am putting to you Sir, that the GS: 14, plus the benefits amount to a total of \$1.5 million.

Mr. Chairman: You are supposed to ask him that question. Do not put it to me. Put to me a question to the Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am suggesting that it is that. I was asking if that could be confirmed or denied. If it is denied, provide us with the ...

Mr. Chairman: I suggest that we move on. The Minister has answered.

Mr. Mahipaul: I will move on in the interest of time, Sir, and on the basis of the Hon. Minister not cooperating. Sadly, I will move on, in the interest of time.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul you are imputing. The Hon. Minister has cooperated. He has answered and answered. If the Hon. Minister is not giving you an answer which you would like to hear, that is not an issue for the House.

Mr. Seeraj: I rise on a Point of Order. The Hon. Member is bringing ‘hear say’ information to the House. I am saying, Sir, for the record, the number that he is calling, my salary is about a quarter of that. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Member Seeraj. The Hon. Member has defended himself. Go ahead, Hon. Member Mr. Seeraj. Do you want to continue?

Mr. Seeraj: I want to add that the Hon. Member is aware of that. He is just trying to score some cheap political points by calling all sorts of numbers, as I said, from ‘hear say’. He is aware that my salary is about a quarter of the number he is calling.

Mr. Mahipaul: Let me confirm to you that I am unaware of what the Hon. Member is saying. What I am aware of is what I mentioned in this House earlier. In the interest of time, I wish to move on and pose no other questions under this programme.

Programme: 131 – Policy Development and Administration – \$363,872,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Programme: 133 – Regional Development - \$69,960,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line items 6111 to 6117 – Staffing Details: When I carefully look at this allocation in this Budget, the largest budget ever as touted, there is an increase in allocation for the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. I see in all three of the programmes, Programme 131, 133 and 134, that there is a reduction in the staff complement. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what has contributed to this reduction, and if his staff complement is adequate to spend the amount of money allocated, taking into account that, in 2021, the allotted sum to this Ministry was not spent in full? Are we likely to see a similar event unfold due to the Ministry probably being understaffed?

Mr. Dharamlall: There were some resignations and there were some transfers which resulted in the reduced number. We have a philosophy in Government that, as part of our governance, a bloated government is not the solution to our problems. It is how we build efficiency and also how it speaks to the competence with which we do our work. Employing people very wildly would not resolve the problems that you just indicated, Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul; it is how we manage the resources that we have. Yes, we have a massive budget.

11.06 a.m.

I believe that there is enough competence in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, especially in our engineering services department, and they will be able to engage in all the resources that are covered under this Programme: 133.

Mr. Mahipaul: I thank the Hon. Minister for his response. I take you back to the same set of line items which speak to staffing at the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. In 2021, Programme: 131 had an allocation of \$393,541,000, to which \$324,448,000 was spent, with a staff complement of 101. It is a reduction in terms of their spending. They did not spend the allocated amount. Now, in 2022, there are going to be 84 staff in that programme to spend \$363,872,000.

In 2021, Programme: 133 had an allocation of \$106,990,000. Sadly, the Ministry spent \$73,560,000. The number of staff, in 2021, was 15. That is now reduced to 9, as seen in the budget estimates. Programme: 134 had a staffing detail of 33 and, in 2021, it was allocated \$1,350,348,000 of which they spent \$1,312,435,000.

There is a reduction in the staff. The Minister claims that the staff complement he has, or had, was able to do well for the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, notwithstanding not spending the allocated sum in *Budget 2021*. *Budget 2022* sees a larger amount of money allocated to this Ministry, but a significant reduction in staff. Does the Minister believe that he will be able to expend this money with the necessary human resources that he has?

With reference to line item 6112, Senior Technical, which encompasses engineers, I also see a significant reduction in the number in the staffing detail. I would like to know if the Minister

believes that he has the necessary capacity in the technical field in his Ministry to spend this large sum of money.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, if I could sum up the same question with a different inflection, that is, senior technical engineer... Go ahead, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you for that page of a lot of commercial in a question which shows the incompetence of Mr. Mahipaul, Hon. Member.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Mr. Dharamlall: No. Mr. Chairman, I have to be honest. I am a very blunt person when I speak. Mr. Mahipaul is one of the casualties...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the word 'incompetence'...

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Mahipaul is one of the casualties of one of the programmes. I think that is what is hurting Mr. Mahipaul. There are reasons for all of this. Firstly, a lot of the increases had to do with the salary increases. In some cases, the reduction in the spending at the end of the year had to do with the security because we had planned for the entire year and the contracts were signed much later. It is so basic to understand these things. If you go through the Chart of Accounts, you will see where the reductions are. Finally, and appropriately, yes, the staff of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development are extremely competent because they are the ones who put this budget together. I believe, and the Government believes, that they are going to be able to execute this budget.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister, for the lesson in competence, and Mr. Mahipaul for matching it with incompetence. You may proceed, Hon. Member.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I was rereading your note. Sir, you know when someone is not at your level, they tend to describe you in the negative, but I would not stoop to that level. I know that I am very competent, and I know that I am asking pertinent questions.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, this is question time. We are trading how witty we are. The first negative term was 'incompetence' introduced by you. If the Minister answered in the

negative too, we cannot stop him. We cannot allow you to criticise that. We will allow you to go on with your questioning. You may proceed.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. I just want you to know that I am very competent. Line item 6281 – Security Services: Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to explain or justify this significant increase from \$12,512,000 to \$33,288,000?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Mahipaul made reference to Programme: 133, line item 6281, Security Services, but the budget book that I am reading here has the budget of \$24 million in 2021. The revised was \$3.671 million and the budget for 2022 is \$9.700 million. I do not know which...

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. That is what I am reading also, but the Hon. Member is competent.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I was at Local Government Development. That is a question to come so the Hon. Minister can prepare. I wanted to give him an *upper hand*. I would like to rest my case for Programme: 133, but I think my colleague has a question. I rest my case.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Could the Hon. Minister tell us what are the items that fall under line item 6284, Other?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have a multibillion-dollar budget, and the Hon. Nima Flue-Bess is asking me about a \$2.6 million budget item; imagine that. Seriously, I am amazed. Covered here would be notices, advertisements, television and radio programmes, signage, work study stipends, markings and other operational things within the programme.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development – \$69,960,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 134 – Local Government Development – \$1,346,859,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: The number has grown from 7 to 12. May I ask the Hon. Minister to provide us with the designation of the 12 contracted employees and their respective remuneration packages per month? Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a technical advisor on solid waste, who has been there for quite a long time; two Senior Environmental Officers; and 9 district Community Development Officers (CDOs). That is how we ended up at 12.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, is the Hon. Minister going to provide us with the remuneration packages for these officers?

Mr. Dharamlall: The remuneration packages range from \$74,900 to \$537,578 for the technical advisor.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am happy that the Hon. Minister provided us with the remuneration packages, the specific numbers. It is quite unfortunate that we did not get it earlier. Sir, I turn your attention to line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister confirm if this is the agency from which the Regional Executive Officers (REOs) of the 10 respective regions get their salaries?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, no.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I did not hear the answer. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to repeat?

Mr. Chairman: He said no.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister advise if this is the line item from which the Regional Chairpersons, Vice-Chairpersons, Overseers, Deputy Mayors and Mayors receive their benefits from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, yes.

Mr. Mahipaul: What did he say?

Mr. Chairman: He said yes.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you may need to come a bit closer to the microphone.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could the Hon. Minister say to this honourable House why is it that the Region 8 Deputy Mayor, who is elected, sworn to office and is actively involved in her duties, not provided with her stipend for the past...

Mr. Chairman: Does Region 8 have a Deputy Mayor?

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Region 8?

Mr. Mahipaul: Mahdia, the township in Region 8. Thank you very much for your guidance. Why is it that she has not been provided with her stipend for the past seven months?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think he may have to rephrase that question. The past seven months is an issue. I would rephrase for him. Would the Deputy Mayor of Mahdia get a stipend from this allocation?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, yes, the Deputy Mayor of Mahdia would get a stipend from this allocation. There are 20 Mayors and Deputy Mayors, 10 each, in our country. This is the first time that I am hearing... As a matter of fact, I wish to state, publicly, that the Mayor of Georgetown has been claiming, at different times last year, that he did not receive his stipend but, when we checked with his accounts department in the municipality, the stipend was there. It was just that the Mayor was not going to collect his money. I do not know. This is the first time I am hearing that the Deputy Mayor of Mahdia has not received... How come the Mayor has received and the Deputy Mayor has not received it? Ideally, they should check with the township. I can tell you publicly too that, in Mahdia, we have some issues in terms of the governance because the building where the Town Council is, under the last Administration, is the building that belongs to the Mayor – downstairs. [**Mr. Holder:** What does that have to do with her not getting...] There is a set of *incestuousness* in the administration of the Mahdia Town Council. That is just for the record.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, under the same line item. Under Expenses Specific to the Agency, the two previous programmes had zero allocations, and this one has a total of \$290 million. I am guided that it is the line item to which Regional Chairpersons, Vice Chairpersons, Overseers, Mayors and Deputy Mayors receive their salaries and stipends. There has been no change in that figure in terms

of percentage increase. As I would have established in my budget speech, they unfortunately were not subject to the salary increase.

11.21 a.m.

The number which was there last year which was budgeted is \$285 million and what was the spent is \$213,020,000. Now, I am seeing a significant increase to \$290 million. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what other expenses fall under this line item, including the salaries of the Regional Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Overseer, Mayors, and Deputy Mayors?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, in all of the histrionics of the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, I had actually mentioned that the Regional Executive Officers (REOs) do not get their salaries from this line item; they actually do.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you. That is what I was looking for, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: And thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what is the salary and other benefits in total, per month, for the REOs in the 10 respective regions, and could the Hon. Minister say if the salary is uniform for all 10 REOs or are there different numbers for different REOs?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to state publicly, again, that all the REOs under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) work under the same conditions and they earn the exact/same salary, quite unlike what happened in the last Administration of the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC). Also, I would like to state that in the last Administration of the APNU/AFC, some of the REOs, like I said, had varying sums and ended up earning more than permanent secretaries. To let you know, the REOs earn just over \$403,000 – that is all they earn – much less than what you were earning.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am not certain if I heard correctly. Much more than what I am earning; thank you for that clarification. Cde. Chairman, for the \$290 million, we have established that it caters for the salaries of REOs, Regional Chairpersons, Regional Vice Chairpersons, Overseers, Mayors and Deputy Mayors. Does it cater for any other expense?

Mr. Dharamlall: Everything in this budget caters for something. This is not a slush fund as happened in the last Administration. It is not a slush fund. So, yes, it caters for other expenses, many of which will be announced to the public in the very near future, and to the benefit of the people of Guyana.

Mr. Mahipaul: Cde. Chairman, may I ask the Hon. Member to say to this honourable House and the nation what are the other expenses under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are some proposals that would be announced in the very near future, but I can tell you that they would redound to the benefit of our councillors across the country.

Mr. Mahipaul: I think I just found the slush fund of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, could you tell us where you found it?

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me?

Mr. Chairman: Could you tell us where you found it?

Mr. Mahipaul: I found it at line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister...

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I did not ask a question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I want clarifications.

Mr. Mahipaul: Okay, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, is that line item a slush fund?

Mr. Dharamlall: No, Mr. Chairman. It shudders one that Mr. Mahipaul, being an Hon. Member, having served in the Ministry for five years as a Community Development Officer attached to Region 3, and having lived in a Government quarter, free for five years, would come here and denigrate the character of the people who will benefit. Our councillors are the ones who will benefit from this. Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul from the APNU/AFC, are you trying to deny our councillors an opportunity to benefit from this? Is that what you are asking?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I do not know why the Hon. Minister is getting angry. I asked a simple question. The answer is not being provided. I am free to draw whatever conclusion I want if the answer is not provided. I am asking, what are the other expenses under this line item. The Hon. Minister is refusing to answer and that is why I draw that conclusion.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, the manner the Hon. Minister is answering is not up for questioning. The issue here is the allocation in this line item. It is not calling for you to state to the National Assembly what you think it is. It is for you to ask a question of the Hon. Minister and the Hon. Minister to answer the question. The conclusion that you draw, if you are going to put it on the records, then I will have to ensure that your conclusion is fully addressed. I just want to bring to your attention that I stopped the clock. We have an hour allocated for this head and we are now at 13 minutes remaining. Go ahead, Hon. Member.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, may I ask the Hon. Minister to provide to this House a total sum of money for the salaries of REOs, for the salaries of Regional Chairpersons, for the salaries of Regional Vice Chairpersons, for the stipends of Overseers, Mayors and Deputy Mayors, so I could ascertain the amount of money that will be utilised from the \$290 million for these specific salaries and benefits?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Member; a beautiful question.

Mr. Dharamlall: My understanding of a sum is when one adds up everything. We ended up at \$290,842,049. That is the total sum.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, help me out. Did the Hon. Minister say \$290 million, \$400 and something dollars and an additional number?

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat, Hon. Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: Sorry, I said \$290 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: We are on the same page. Cde. Chairman, I turn your attention to line item 6294, Other. Does this sum cater for the management of the Haggs Bosch Landfill site?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, it caters for the management of the Haggs Bosch Sanitary Landfill Facility, inclusive of others.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, is this the total sum for the operation's cost for this landfill site? If not, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what is the total sum allocated for the operation's cost and if it caters for other landfill sites also?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I do not know why I have to repeat myself. I said the Hagg Bosch and other landfills. I think the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, is wasting time asking the same questions over and over.

Mr. Mahipaul: Probably if you speak louder, I will hear. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say how many landfill sites there are in Guyana and where are they located?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, I think the question should be how many landfill sites are catered for under this line item. If you want the other information you could send in a request.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you have been able to answer it for us. We have 13 out of 15 landfills sites that we are paying for. We also have some additional ones that will be constructed this year. You know that solid waste management is one of the major issues affecting community development. I would like to use this opportunity to ask the APNU/AFC to support the cleaning of our country. I know they have publicly said, *via* their Leader, including many members of the Coalition leadership, that they would not support it. They have called on some of their councils not to support the clearing of Guyana. I think that is very outrageous. **[Mr. Jones: *Inaudible*]**. Despite their clamour, I must state to you that the private sector and the councils, including Linden and Georgetown, had councillors who came out. To tell you, it was a very cheap exercise, in the sense that it did not cost much. All it cost was the will to get it done. It is unfortunate that 31 persons in here, on the Opposition side, are refusing to work with the Government, refusing to work with the private sector, and refusing to work with the citizens of Guyana to clean our country. I could report to you, Mr. Chairman, that we have done a fantastic job. The citizens of Guyana are doing a fantastic job in making sure that... **[Mr. Jones: A fantastic job with your propaganda.]** **[Ms. Hughes: *Inaudible* of all the people.]** Of all the people who said shame, Cathy the caitiff is saying shame. You Cathy, you are the more shameless person in this House.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, speak to the Chairman with respect to the Opposition.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. There is a caitiff in the House, and that caitiff should be the last person to speak about shame because they prance around here pretentiously...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, let us expunge “shame” from the words.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I will send him the note that you sent me.

Mr. Dharamlall: I have the notes since yesterday. We are doing more work in solid waste management in other regions and areas, including some of our Amerindian villages. We will see investments in the operations of landfills. I can report to you that Region 10, Linden specifically, has been the cleanest now than it has ever been before. Unfortunately, the Hon. Member, Mr. Devin Sears, and my Colleague Mr. Figueira, did not come out in support, but the Mayoress and Deputy Mayor came out in full support, despite the instruction of the APNU/AFC. This weekend we are going to Kwakwani, and Kwakwani will also be clean.

Mr. Mahipaul: Cde. Chairman, articles 71 to 78 in our Constitution speaks to local democracy, and I assure you that the APNU/AFC respects all our local organisations. A testimony to that is the fact that we held two local government elections in our five-year term in Office. It is not a case of whether we have lost or won, but it is one way we respected the Constitution, and we will continue to do so when we go back into Office soon.

May I turn your attention to line item 6321, Subsidies and Contributions to Local Organisations? This is an allocation for the Local Government Commission. I honestly thought that I would have seen a breakdown of this sum in Appendix T, but unfortunately... [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] Yes, I did. The reason I did so was because I expected the budget to show that this is a constitutional agency, and the spending is one which would not be determined by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. Unfortunately, that did not happen and that is why I thought wrong. May I ask, from this allocation for the Local Government Commission...

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, just to correct the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I will put the question to you, and you will get an opportunity to answer.

Mr. Mahipaul: Under this sum of \$165,467,000, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to indicate to this House what is the salary and other benefits of the Chairman of the Local Government Commission?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you have to respond to the issue of the constitution and the Local Government Commission and also the second part.

Mr. Dharamlall: Just to correct the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, once again, because the Opposition has the proclivity to mention the Constitution, but their penchant has always been a dismantling of the Constitution. The Local Government Commission is not constitutional agency, so please stand corrected. If you want to ask me the question over, you could ask me again, but I could let you know it is not a constitutional agency. What else do you want me to answer?

Mr. Chairman: There is a second part with respect to the emoluments of the Chairperson. Go ahead with the second part.

11.36 a.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the salary of the Local Government Commission's Chairman and Commissioners is the same as what the APNU/AFC gave to the Local Government Commission's Chairman and Commissioners during that period when the Commission was established a few years ago. It ranges, for Commissioner, from \$232,000 to \$696,000. As a matter of fact, I think the last Chairman of the Commission may have earned more than this.

Mr. Mahipaul: Was it way less?

Mr. Dharamlall: No. The last Chairman earned more and received more benefits out of the Commission than what the current Chairman is benefiting from.

Mr. Mahipaul: It would be very good of the Minister, rather than to speculate, to provide us with the evidence so it could be substantiated that, indeed, the former Chairman was benefiting more than the current Chairman, and probably do a comparison so that we would be able to know whether it is factual or not.

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking that as a question or are you making a speech?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I am asking the Hon. Minister to provide a comparison between the former Commissioners and the current Commissioners so that we could deduce that what he is saying is accurate rather than to filibuster.

Mr. Chairman: I would not put that question, because the Minister stood here and said it is the same. Now you are asking for written evidence because you say you do not believe the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: Cde. Chairman, he said that he believes that the former Chairman was benefiting more.

Mr. Chairman: Sorry. The Hon. Minister had asked that you correct yourself about the Local Government Commission not being a constitutional agency.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I never said it is. I said I expected it to be – that is what I said – where I would have seen in appendix T...

Mr. Chairman: Alright. We will check the *Hansard* and we will [*inaudible*]

Mr. Mahipaul: That is fair enough. I expected it to be where I would have seen a breakdown.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, are you prepared to provide a comparison of the Chairman and Commissioners package?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I said the salary is the same.

Mr. Chairman: I thought I heard that too.

Mr. Dharamlall: I did also say that the benefits have been more for the former Chairman than the current Chairman.

Mr. Mahipaul: It is on that basis I am saying the comparison will give us the factual evidence rather than anecdotal speeches on that matter.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a next question, Hon. Member?

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to provide a breakdown of the allocation to the Local Government Commission, so that we could understand how much money

will be allocated to statutory wages and salaries, employment costs, overhead expenditure; materials, equipment and supplies; fuel and lubricant; rental and maintenance of building; maintenance of infrastructure; transport, travel and postage; utility charges; other goods and services purchased; other operating expenses; education subvention and training; and all the line items there that cater for a sum that is allocated to an agency that has the liberty like all other agencies under Appendix T where there is a breakdown.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am very happy. I wish Mr. Mahipaul could ask me this question in all the deliberations. I will read everything now. Line item 6111, Administrative – \$8,312,092; line item 6112, Senior Technical – \$23,505,268; line item 6114, Clerical and Office Support – \$19,846,241. I missed line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled – \$22,926,800; Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled – \$2,306,124; Contracted Employees – \$10,382,033; Other Direct Labour Cost – \$2,416,312; Benefits and Allowances – \$7,271,966; NIS – \$5,118,132; total audit charges – \$32,632,952; Materials and Equipment – \$2,550,000; line item 6221, Drugs and Medical Supplies – \$75,000; line item 6222, Field Materials and Supply – \$75,000; line item 6223, Office Materials and Supplies – \$1,200,000; line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials – \$1.2 million; line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants – \$1.2 million; line item 6241, Rental of Buildings – \$16,176,600; line item 6243, Janitorial and Cleaning – \$350,000; Maintenance of Other Infrastructure – \$100,000; line item 6261, Local Travel and Subsistence – \$1,000,000; line item 6263, Postage, Telex and Cablegrams – \$41,092; line item 6264, Vehicle Spares and Service – \$300,000; line item 6265, Other Transport, Travel and Postage – \$1,000,000; Utility Charges – \$2,050,000; line item 6271, Telephone Charges – \$500,000; line item 6272, Electricity Charges – \$1,500,000; line item 6273, Water Charges – \$50,000. Other Goods and Services – \$6,175,260 – and this is comprised of line item 6281, Security Services – \$5,840,260; line item 6281, Equipment Maintenance – \$75,000; line item 6283, Cleaning and Extermination Services – \$150,000; Other – \$110,000. Other Operating Expenses, the total is \$690,000, broken down this way: – line item 6291, National and Other Events, \$200,000; line item 6293, Refreshments and Meals, \$440,000; Other, line item 6294 – \$50,000. Subvention and Training, a total of \$1,000,000, broken down, line item 6302, Training (including Scholarships) – \$1,000,000.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, we have exhausted the time allocated for these heads. We are actually three minutes over.

Programme: 134 – Local Government Development – \$1,346,859,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 131 – Policy Development and Administration – \$43,105,000

Programme: 131 – Policy Development and Administration – \$43,105,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 133 – Regional Development – \$400,500,000

Programme: 133 – Regional Development – \$400,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 134 – Local Government Development – \$8,119,400,000

Programme: 134 – Local Government Development – \$8,119,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let me thank the Minister and his staff as we now prepare to take into consideration the other programmes under this head. We are now going to go to Region 1. Again, I will go through the current expenditure, then we will put the capital expenditure. Let us give the Hon. Member and his team an opportunity to get settled before we start. We will start the clock at 11.06 a.m.

Agency: 71 Region 1: Barima/Waini

Current Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$283,519,000

Mr. Cox: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: There has been a significant increase in *Budget 2022* with an increase of two staff. Could the Hon. Minister detail the designation and the emoluments of the two additional staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: One is a Cook, and one is a Cleaner. Would you like to know the emoluments?

Mr. Cox: Yes.

Mr. Dharamlall: It is \$79,935 plus a station allowance of \$2,400. The National Insurance Scheme (NIS) is \$6,715. I could give you the prorated gratuity if you want me to spend more time. The other is \$74,900 with a station allowance of \$2,400 as well.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: \$17.5 million allocated. I would like the Hon. Minister to detail the buildings to be maintained across the three districts within the regions.

Mr. Dharamlall: I will be happy to do so. We have to provide comfort to our staff. This is one of the reasons we are doing this here. We will be doing a concrete, timber and zinc maintenance at Mabaruma. The present physical condition of this building, that is the living quarters of the Regional Chairman: the floor is damaged; joists are damaged; kitchen cupboards are damaged; the gutter requires maintenance; and the stairs and columns of the building. We expect to do repairs to all of these: the floor, the joists, the kitchen cupboards, the gutter, stairs and columns. It is expected to be executed between March to July of this year. Then we have the Assistant Regional Executive Officer's (AREO's) living quarters in Moruca. Again, that is a timber building mostly; the roof is made of zinc. The damages include the ceiling, electrical issues, windows, doors, beams and floor joists. We will have to repair the ceiling. We have to do some maintenance on the electrical installation in the building, the windows, the doors, the beams and the floor joists; that too was expected to be completed by July.

The regional stores in Mabaruma: we have to do some extensive work on the regional stores – concrete, timber and zinc; some beams are damaged; again, the floor is damaged; wall, tiles, doors, and grill work are also damaged. The repairs will be done to floor joists and beams, walls, floor tiles, doors, and grill work, and by July we are expected to complete that.

Mr. Cox: Hon. Minister, for clarity, the Regional Chairman's residence that you refer to, is this the annex of the regional guest house?

11.51 a.m.

My second question here is on line item 6284. Could you detail what constitutes Other?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I did not hear that part with Other. Could the Hon. Member just repeat that, please?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr Cox, repeat.

Mr. Cox: I repeat, Mr. Chairman – I am asking the Hon. Minister to clarify if the Regional Chairman’s residence, which he referred to, is the annexe to the regional guest house? The second question is on line item 6284. Could the Hon. Minister detail what constitutes Other, under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the Regional Chairman currently occupies the annexe to the guest house, temporarily. The Other in this case is related to the payment for security and the tender board related issues all in one.

Mr. Ramjattan: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: The expenditure here of \$4 million increase would include... This is not for the increase but the entire \$53 million. Would it generally go to things that the Regional Councillors and the Regional Chairman would want to spend on? Is that why it is specific to the agency?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Ramjattan... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Honourable.] Honourable. I had to *mash brakes* there just now. The Toshaos get paid here; the Senior Councillors get paid here; the Regional Councillors get their stipend paid here; and there are other related charges for the conduct of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC); for example, the hosting of their meetings and so. Those are covered here.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I am guided by the budget circular which came out from the Finance Secretary (FS), who is a very intelligent and good friend of mine, Mr. Sukrishnalall Pasha – a strong name too. It details that there must be a committee set up for the creation of the budget. Line item 6211 speaks directly to the Regional Democratic Council and that allocation is specific to that agency. Could the Hon. Minister say if the Regional Democratic Council met at a statutory meeting or an extraordinary meeting and ratified this budget that is before us for Region 1? Did the Regional Chairman and Councillors give their blessings? In keeping with the Finance Circular 6 of 2021, which was issued in July, did they meet at a

statutory or extraordinary meeting, which is catered for under line item 6211, ratify and give their blessings for submission to the Ministry of Finance before it reached here?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy that Mr. Mahipaul raised that because he is setting himself up when it comes to some of the regions. I am forewarning him. I am forewarning Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul, that he is setting himself up. It will show a lot of incompetence, but I am happy that you raised it.

In the case of the RDC in Region 1, it is not just the RDC that met and ratified this budget; I can tell you that we have visited every community in Region 1. Mr. Collin Croal, who is the regional Member of Parliament (MP), Councillors of the RDC, the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Minister of Amerindian Affairs, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education, the Minister within the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development, some of my other Colleagues and different agencies of the Government have actually met with the village councils. We have all contributed to the construction of this budget. It was totally and fully complied with.

Mr. Mahipaul: I thank the Hon. Minister for that answer. It was a very good answer. All I want to know is if there was a statutory, extraordinary or special meeting – whatever other word that you want to use – where the Regional Democratic Council, the elected council as elected by the people, for the people, met and ratified the submission to the Ministry of Finance. If the Hon. Minister can... I should await his answer.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mahipaul would like to know... He is getting to Region 4 where the Chairman went and protested in New York rather than doing the budget of the people. He was elected by the people and for the people to get constructive. I believe, as an elected official, Mr. Mahipaul can relate to the Regional Chairman of Region 1, and he will know to what extent they did consultations. I can assure you and the people of Guyana that there was paramount consultation, and we are satisfied that everyone and every village in Region 1 will benefit from this *Budget 2022*.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I ascertained, from what the Hon. Minister said, that, indeed, the RDC met and ratified this budget. Indeed, the Regional Chairman and Councillors gave their blessings to this allocation, this sum that is...

Mr. Chairman: You have to be very careful because at one time you are referring to the submission to the Ministry of Finance, and then, in the same breath, you are now talking about this particular allocation.

Mr. Mahipaul: You have my apologies. I am guided by you, and you are very accurate, Sir. Thank you for your correction.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Mahipaul: I ascertained from the answer of the Minister that indeed the RDC met and ratified a submission to the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: I thank the Hon. Minister for that good answer. May I ask him to tender, to this honourable Committee, the minutes of the meeting that the RDC had, where it ratified the submission that was made to the Ministry of Finance?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, under what line item is Mr. Mahipaul asking...?

Mr. Chairman: It is under the submission.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I do not know the line item where...

Mr. Mahipaul: It is line item 6211.

Mr. Chairman: It is the sum appropriated. We put a sum – that this sum stands as part of the Estimates.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, in 2022 this sum will not show that a meeting occurred in 2021; this is a budget of 2022.

Mr. Chairman: He is asking about ratifying the submission to the Ministry of Finance. It is not this particular sum.

Mr. Dharamlall: In this line item I do not think that is covered. It does not backdate something that happened, like what the APNU/AFC used to do. It backdated stuff in the previous year. I know

that the minutes of the RDC meetings are public documents which the Regional Councillors of the APNU/AFC within the RDC [*inaudible*].

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, I thank the Hon. Minister for that good answer again. I know it is, as he claimed, a public document. I am asking for it for this Committee, so it becomes a part of the record to substantiate the answer the Hon. Minister provided when he said they did meet to ratify a proposed amount.

Mr. Chairman: The Minister has answered where it could be found. I do not think you are going to get another answer, but I will put it again to him if you want.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, my impartial Chairman; the greatest of respect to you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$283,519,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 – Public Works – \$416,093,000

Mr. Cox: Line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled to line item 6117, Temporary Employees: I saw there is a decrease of the staff under those three line items. Could the Hon. Minister provide some details as to why the drastic reduction in the number of staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the staff moved from 19 to 15 so I do not know how it is drastic. There were four labourers who left the job – one retired and three absconded. Those were the four Labourers in line item 6115, Semi-Skilled Operatives and Unskilled. For line item 6116, Contracted Employees, three left the job. This includes one Driver and two Labourers. For line item 6117, Temporary Employees, this drastically moved from two to one; one Labourer retired.

Mr. Cox: Hon. Minister, thank you for your attempt at a sense of humour. It represents a nine-member staff reduction. Mr. Chair, at line item 6231, Fuel and Lubricants, there is an allocated sum of \$148 million. That is an increase of more than \$4.5 million from the previous... Could the Hon. Minister detail the specific areas to benefit from this allocated sum?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, if you do not mind, I just want to correct the Hon. Member Mr. Ronald Cox. These people did not leave their jobs, many of them; they retired, some of these labourers. I find it strange that the APNU/AFC would treat people with such indignity, the way you described the work that they do.

On the other issue of Fuel and Lubricants: we have a lot of work to do because a lot of work was not done in the five-year period. We have to visit people; we have to go around the communities. We make decisions based on meeting with the people on the ground, not in Georgetown or at the whims and fancies of the MPs in the different regions. You will find us making more frequent visits across all the sub-regions and to all the installations within those regions, including the villages and the communities.

Mr. Cox: I am happy that the Hon. Minister will be visiting communities. Obviously, that is mandated by his election as a Minister. Mr. Chairman through you, Hon. Minister, line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings: again I wish the specific requirements for the buildings to be maintained in Port Kaituma only.

Mr. Dharamlall: It will be the Engineer's living quarters in Port Kaituma.

Mr. Cox: Line item 6281 – Security Services: Mr. Chairman, could the Hon. Minister say if the contracted security service from 2021 is the same security service that will be providing services for 2022 under this allocated sum? If no, which other security service will be considered or is there going to be another tendering process?

12.06 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: The straight answer is that the same security firm who started this contract in May, last year, is the current security provider. As soon as the resources are approved, then we will have a new tender out.

Mr. Cox: I trust that this security will up its standards in this year's provision of services, because security officers have been waiting months for their payments within the region. Line item 6264 – Vehicle Spares and Service: Could the Hon. Minister say again the specific types of vehicles catered for here under this programme – Public Works?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is land and water transport so it would be boats and land vehicles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV) and other vehicles assigned to the Public Works Department.

Mr. Cox: I know the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) has a fleet of vehicles. I am asking specific to Public Works. Let us say two buses or two ATVs or such like.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would think that as a Member of Parliament (MP) of Region 1, you would like to know the work that we are doing in the region and not the vehicles that we are maintaining. The vehicles are a grader, a backhoe, two bulldozers, 90 Kilovolt-amps (KVA) generator, a Honda pressure washer, a plate compactor, a bosch jackhammer, a Massey Ferguson tractor, two Honda motorcycles, two point six KVA generator, one Stihl Power Saw in Mabaruma and another one in Moruca; a 312 caterpillar and three ATVs.

Programme: 712 – Public Works – \$416,093,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$1,822,584,000

Mr. Cox: Line item 6112 – Senior Technical: there has been a reduction of eight staff with an increase of about \$15 million under this allocated sum. Could the Hon. Minister detail the reasons for the reduction? What are the designations of the Senior Technical that is now vacant? What provision is catered for under the reduction, despite the reduction?

Mr. Dharamlall: A lot of the increases had to do with the promotion of teachers and other staff within and of course staff increases too. In terms of the vacancies, we are vigorously perusing getting those vacancies filled.

Mr. Cox: I just want to get clarity on the response from the Hon. Minister. Did he say promotion of teachers? I am not aware that we have been promoting teachers of quite recent knowing that the Teaching Service Commission is not in operation over the last few years.

Mr. Dharamlall: There were eight assistant masters/mistresses trained in the technical field and they were upgraded to senior assistant masters/mistresses.

Mr. Cox: Thank you, Hon. Member, just for clarity, that is not promotion and we must get this straight. Those are redesignations within the system. Line item 6294 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister detail what is catered for under line items 6284 and 6294 – other? Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, upgrade, promotion, redesignation and the questions of page [inaudible].

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think upgrade also includes redesignation and promotion, so I do not know *wa yuh fancying up yuself over*. Line item 6284– Other, the first one there, there has been a reduction \$2.3 million and that is because it caters or the sweeper-cleaner contracts and, in some cases, some did not renew so that is why there is a reduction and in line item 6294, those would be stuff like tokens and so forth during graduation periods at schools.

Mr. Cox: A Follow up: line item 6294 would cater for things such as tokens during graduation and so forth. Could the Hon. Minister state whether the RDC so far has done its annual prize giving exercises and whether the regional top awardees have been awarded quite appropriately. Has that been done for last year?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I think you may need to rephrase that; ‘Is that catered for in this allocation?’.

Mr. Cox: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: If he is referring to last year, yes. In some cases, it was done.

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat? We did not hear you well.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I said if the Hon. Member is referring to last year, yes there were some ceremonies done last year.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$1,822,584,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 – Health Services – \$1,302,600,000

Mr. Cox: Line item 6117– Temporary Employees: There is a reduction from 33 to 20 employees. I wish to find out if this reduction relates to the persons who were employed under the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) taskforce for their services within the three districts.

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a possibility that could be so. They were temporary contracts so when the contracts came to an end, that was it.

Mr. Cox: Thank you, Hon. Minister and thank you Mr. Chairman. Line item 6221 – Drugs and Medical Supplies: There is an increase of \$30 million. Is the increase adequate knowing that we are still battling the global pandemic? I would like to know with specifics about the amounts allocated. For example, how it is done; is it for the different district; or is it a wholesome for the health and then they are distributed after meetings or so?

Mr. Dharamlall: I believe that we have gotten a very far way with the supply of drugs and medical supplies to our regional institutions. This was one of the chronic problems that we faced when we came into Government. Billions of dollars were spent but yet, still persons within our country, different parts of our regions and in Region 1 were suffering tremendously as a result of shortage of drugs and medical supplies. I want to assure the Guyanese people and the people of Region 1 in this particular case that when they turn up to a medical facility, whether a health post, a health centre or a hospital, they will be adequately treated. The intervention of this year’s budget is to ensure that at all times drugs and medical supplies are within the health institutions in the regions. I have an entire list here. I do not know if the Hon. Member would like me to read the entire list. [An Hon. Member (Opposition): You could lay it over.] I am not a fowl; I do not lay. I could read every one if you like. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Cox, would you like the Hon. Minister to read all of it?

Mr. Cox: Mr. Chairman, in my last question, I cannot recall asking for anything to be laid over. Thank you.

Dr. Cummings: Line item 6282 – Equipment Maintenance: What are the equipment to be maintained? I have noticed from \$6 million to \$14 million. The second question I want to ask, is there a workshop there that can be used to utilise the skills of young people who have come from

Guyana Industrial Training Centre (GITC), Government Technical Institute (GTI) or from the University of Guyana? How many vehicles are in the fleet?

Mr. Dharamlall: To answer the second question first, I listened to the Minister of Labour when we expanded the training programme of the Government across all 10 regions of Guyana. Yes, as long as persons are trained in the regions, we will utilise their skills.

For the first question, the maintenance will cover Energetic High-Frequency Electromagnetic Radiation (X-RAY) units and ultrasound machines, Mindray haematology, chemical or chemistry analyser, 10 defibrillators, nine autoclaves, suction machines and other medical equipment within the installations of the region.

Dr. Cummings: Through the Chairman, do they have biomedical persons there who will service these equipment?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am advised that there is no biomedical technician in the region but these services are usually contracted out. Also, just to indicate as well, through the central Ministry, the Ministry of Health, it plays a critical support in guiding the maintenance requirements of these machines.

Dr. Cummings: Through the Chairman, before I go on to the next line item, the A Partnership for National Unity and Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) have made towns and health is decentralised so we really want to improve the services of health in these regions. We want to narrow the gaps of inequities and inequalities. We really want to know that at the region they have the type of persons who could do these repairs. I would like the capacity to be built so in the region itself that these equipment are being serviced, going forward.

12.21 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy for that comment, which is that APNU is finally cooperating with the Government. Yes, I believe that continuous training is necessary. We tend to use local skills as much as possible and, in this case, in the regions. I would also like to let you know and reaffirm what the Hon. Minister of Health said about the Mabaruma Hospital, which is now a smart hospital and will be commissioned as a smart hospital in the very, very near future. The services of the health sector in Region 1 are going to be elevated much more than a few years ago.

Programme: 714 – Health Services – \$1,302,600,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 715 – Agriculture – \$25,850,000

Programme: 715 – Agriculture – \$25,850,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are going to deal with all of the capital heads under this agency.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$23,000,000

Mr. Cox: Project code 1208600 – Buildings - Administration: “Provision for storage facility.” The description for the project is the same, so my question is, where will this storage facility be constructed? What are we hoping to store? Is this catering for the entire Regional Democratic Council (RDC) or one specific programme, such as Health, Education, or so?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I think the Hon. Member asked about the construction of a fuel storage facility, so, naturally, it will be storing fuel. It will be in the Moruca Administrative compound and it will cater for all of the programmes of the regional administration. That will be executed in the Moruca subregion.

Mr. Cox: Hon. Minister, for clarity, I asked because it did not specify what storage facility. Thank you, though. Project code 2401500 – Land and Water Transport: “Purchase of vehicle.” Again, which district will be benefitting from this vehicle? Is it Port Kaituma or Moruca?

Mr. Dharamlall: It will be Moruca and, for the first time, there will be a proper vehicle in Moruca.

Programme: 711 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$23,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 712 – Public Works – \$235,300,000

Mr. Cox: Project code 1400400 – Roads: The sum of \$85,100,000 has been budgeted under this programme for: “Provision for Hosororo/Wanaina Road.” Could the Hon. Minister provide some details of the construction of this road? Is it a concrete road? Is it stretching from the Hosororo stretch right up to the Wanaina road? Is it a one project or is it a part, part project, as we have seen over the last year or so?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is a rigid surface road which, in this case, is concrete. We are actually extending the road and, at some point in time, we will get to Wanaina and beyond. The sum here would not be able to take... This is just for about 800 metres. It will be on the Hosororo Hill. There is also a collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works, which will be doing further extension on the road. The people of Mabaruma, especially in those areas, will finally also, during the course of this year, experience much better movement by having a new road made of concrete for the first time.

Mr. Cox: I am very pleased that the Hon. Minister is continuing the works that was started under the Coalition Government. It is not the first time they will experience a concrete road; they have experienced it over the last three to four years or so. Thank you.

Project code Bridges, 1100200: “Provision for bridges and payment of retention. 2. Construction and rehabilitation of bridges at Baramita.” Would this be a concrete bridge or a wooden bridge? I would like to get some specification for this bridge, thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman, indeed Hosororo Hill, for the first time, will have a concrete road. As a matter of fact, when we took Government, it was probably the most pot-holed road in the country left by the APNU/AFC. Regarding the two bridges in Baramita, one would be a log bridge and the other would be a reinforced concrete bridge. Again, for the first time.

Mr. Cox: Project code 2601400 – Power Supply: “2. Provision for electricity distribution networks at Wauna/Tobago, Parakese and Yarakita.” Could the Hon. Minister state if these communities will be having their own generator or is this an expansion of the central grid from central Mabaruma?

Mr. Dharamlall: I wish to report that these are commitments made by His Excellency the President, Dr. Irfaan Ali. There will be an extension in Mabaruma towards Wauna, which would

be an extension of the Mabaruma genset. For the first time in Moruca, the village of Parakese will have electricity with its own genset. For the first time for some people, in Yarakita, will also now have up to 2,000 feet (ft) of an additional network that will be constructed with an additional genset. There will be more residents, households, in Parkaese, Yarakita, Wauna and Tobago who will experience the glory of living under the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C).

Mr. Cox: Thank you, Hon. Minister. The glory had started years before. A follow up for clarity, is the Hon. Minister saying that the Mabaruma Power and Light Company will be expanded in the sense that additional generators will be purchased? What exactly is it, because I have known the present situation at the Mabaruma Power and Light Company is that there are blackouts occasionally? The reason given is that it is inadequate to supply what we already have and so, with this expansion, I am seeing more blackouts.

Mr. Dharamlall: Unfortunately, Mr. Ronald Cox, Hon. Member, you will see a lot of light because we have already procured a new generator. We do a lot of good planning. The people of Mabaruma will also have a new generator that will complement what they currently have.

Mr. Cox: Thank you, Hon. Minister, for the clarity. My other question is on Education and that is the other programme.

Mr. Chairman: Let us put the question.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, you know I have to come in every now and then. There is project code 1400400, Roads, and it speaks to \$85,100,000. The Legend describes: "1. Payment of retention. 2. Provision for Hosororo/Wanaina..." There is a popular name in the media, "Sue". May I ask if "Sue" and his company is doing any work in this area that requires the payment of retention?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I can tell you that it is unfortunate that these are Amerindian areas mostly. The APNU/AFC is speaking with such indignity towards our Amerindian people but that is exactly how the APNU/AFC are. Mr. Chairman, we built a gravel surface road to Kobarimo, an Amerindian area; in Oronoque, an Amerindian area again; and Big Creek, which will go towards the mines area that is populated again by Amerindian people. Mr. Mahipaul, the Hon. Member, will come here and make an outrageous joke about the need for roads by the Amerindian

people in Region 1. That is a total disregard for the people of Region 1, the Amerindian people in particular, by the APNU/AFC.

It is amazing that everything for you, in the Opposition, it is a joke about Amerindian development. What is your problem with Amerindian people? Why is it that you do not want Amerindian people to have roads? Why are you making jokes about them? Do you know why? It is because you never had any care for Amerindian people and the few Amerindian leaders who you have handpicked and hauled into the National Assembly, they have no credibility on the ground. They have absolutely no credibility on the ground. All you are doing is cosmetology.

I want to advise you, implore you: please do not denigrate Amerindian people. As a matter of fact, the Vice-President announced that because of this PPP/C Government, Amerindian people will now have 20% of the landmass of Guyana. That is a commitment of President Irfaan Ali and we will make sure that happens.

12.36 p.m.

What have you done in the last five years without giving them one square inch? We are going to make sure that 20% of the land mass is titled to the Amerindian people of Guyana. That is what we are going to do.

Mr. Cox: My Colleague asked the question but I do not think the Hon. Minister answered the question. Mr. Chairman, I am very offended that the Hon. Minister would go to length to say that there is no credibility with the few Amerindian leaders selected here. I want to know if there is credibility on the other side because there are reports in the media that would suggest otherwise, not on this side, but on that side.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you could have stood on a Point of Order, but I will ask the Hon. Minister, I will put the question to him. Hon. Minister, the issue of the credibility of the Amerindian leaders on your side.

Mr. Dharamlall: I stand by them and I think they are powerful. I think the Amerindian leaders in the PPP/C are outstanding in their service. I know for a fact that the Hon. Minister, Ms. Pauline Sukhai has walked every village or has gone to every village. I know that. I know that the Hon. Member, Ms. Yvonne Pearson is an outstanding Amerindian leader and former Chair of the

National Toshaos Council (NTC), Toshao... [**An. Hon. Member:** (*Inaudible*)] Speak about the others that you have. What has Ms. Hastings-Williams achieved?

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Members, a question with respect to the Estimates now.

Mr. Cox: Yes, Mr. Chairman. Project code 1902600 – Infrastructural Development: “The project entails construction of revetment at Mora and culverts at Matthew’s Ridge.” I would like some details on the revetment for Mora. This culvert at Matthew’s Ridge, is it a new culvert or is it the same culvert that was recently built and plagued with defects?

Mr. Dharamlall: With regard to the construction of the revetment, this is the second phase that we will be doing at Mora and it will be for 120 metres. Naturally also, a lot of employment will be provided for residents in the village. This is in the Moruca sub-region and 576 residents will benefit.

In Matthew’s Ridge, it will be a reinforced concrete culvert. We have begun construction there already and this is now in reinforced concrete. We expect that this three by two, six-metre-wide culvert will substantially enhance the mobility of people across the area where it is being constructed.

Mr. Mahipaul: We, on this side of the House, welcome all form of development for our Indigenous brothers and sisters. I want to assure you Sir, that the APNU/AFC believe that they deserve the best of life, and for all the development that is going to them and continuation from the work already started by the Coalition, we welcome that. All I ask Sir, with reference to the project code 1400400 if ‘Mr. Sue’ or the companies he is associated with, is part of the projects ongoing that will require payment of retention, nothing else?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you asked that, and soon I will have to start invoking the repetitions of the Standing Orders. Hon. Minister, would you like to answer again?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know who ‘Mr. Sue’ is. If Mr. Mahipaul has a fetish with anyone named ‘Mr. Sue’ and the money that ‘Mr. Sue’ makes, then let Mr. Mahipaul deal with ‘Mr. Sue.’ I know that these contractors are from Region 1, quite unlike what happened in the last Government when they were taking contractors from the coast to take into the hinterland. These are contractors within

the region and they are Amerindian based people. These are Amerindian contractors. The Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, just said that APNU/AFC believes in Amerindian development but, at the same time, he is making a mockery of the Amerindian people in this Parliament. It is totally outrageous.

Programme: 712 – Public Works – \$235,300,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$198,500,000

Mr. Cox: Project code 1202600 – Buildings - Education: Could the Hon. Minister state the cost with respect to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) building at Port Kaituma and the Santa Rosa Primary School?

Mr. Dharamlall: Some are rollover projects: the Matthew’s Ridge Primary Annex at Tasawini; Almond Beach Primary School relocated to Khan’s Hill; the extension of Santa Rosa Secondary School that we began last year; and the same with St Nicholas Primary School; the extension of Sebai Primary School and this is one of the populated villages in the Matakai sub-region; and also Matthew’s Ridge Primary School itself.

There are some new projects. We will, for the first time, construct an education office at Oronoque in Port Kaituma. I wish to announce that we will be constructing a new primary school for the children of Oronoque. Arawansa in Moruca will also have a new primary school. Corasima will also have a new primary school in Mabaruma. Once we are building schools, we will also have to accommodate our teachers, so there will be new teachers’ quarters at Wallaba and Corasima. The TVET building at Port Kaituma will also be rehabilitated and the Santa Rosa Primary School will also be rehabilitated.

Mr. Cox: Mr. Chairman, I asked a specific question with respect to the cost of the allocated sum to the TVET building in Port Kaituma and the Santa Rosa Primary School. I can read all the details here and I can see that those are other schools that will be built, expanded and so on, but I asked a specific question and I have my reasons. Could the Hon. Minister please clarify? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I took the opportunity to inform the people of Region 1 and the children where we will be building these schools. The same children that you took away their

money. The contracts or the bidding documents will be made available publicly and as soon as those bids are closed, we will be able to know what the final construction cost for the rehabilitation of the TVET building would be, as well as Santa Rosa Primary School. I could tell you that we have budgeted approximately \$12 million for the TVET Building and more than \$19.6 million for the Santa Rosa Primary School.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, I will allow one more question, as we have now exhausted the time for this Agency. We still have to go through two more Heads. I will put all three remaining Capital Heads after this question. Go ahead, Hon. Member, Mr. Cox.

Mr. Cox: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your generosity. Project code 2401500 – Land and Water Transport: “...purchase of buses, boat, outboard engines and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs).” Are these to be used by the central department of education or are these for the transportation of pupils to schools and, if so, which communities will benefit from these allocations?

My second question is, in light of the global pandemic, project code 2502600, Furniture and Equipment - Education, has the region considered moving from wooden desk and benches to combination for schools? Is that what is budgeted for in this programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: In terms of Land and Water Transport, it will be a 15-horsepower boat and engine for Moruca and it will be for the smaller areas as well as a shedded boat. We will be buying an ATV as well, but this is in Mabaruma. [**An. Hon. Member (Opposition):** *(Inaudible)*]. Do you need the cost? We will be buying also buses for Matakai and Moruca. This is for Land and Water Transport.

In terms of the furniture and equipment, it will be combination chairs and tables, fire extinguishers, industrial washing machines, laptops, filing cabinets, computers, nursery sets, stacking chairs – I hope it is not green – projectors, electronic tablets and water dispensers.

Programme: 713 – Education Delivery – \$198,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 714 – Health Services – \$340,000,000

Programme: 714 – Health Services – \$340,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 715 – Agriculture – \$21,000,000

Programme: 715 – Agriculture – \$21,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we will now resume the Assembly.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will take an hour suspension. It is now 12.49 p.m. Let us get back here at 1.49 a.m.

Sitting suspended at 12.49 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 2.16 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members. Please be seated. Hon. Members we resolve ourselves into Committee of Supply to continue consideration of the Estimates.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I have a request from the Opposition that we revert to taking the programmes current first and then capital, instead of putting all the current then all the capital. We will revert to what I did previously.

2.17 p.m.

Thank you, Hon. Members. We will start the clock rolling at 2.17 p.m. We had a very extended lunch today, let us see if we could make it up.

Agency: 72 Region 2: Pomeroon/Supenaam

Current Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$272,664,000

Mr. Holder: Line item 6116, Contracted Employees, could the Hon. Minister explain to this House why there is an increase of nearly 100%, given the fact that only two staff would be added in 2022?

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and good afternoon. There were four staff that moved to six, so we had two increases. We have a Deputy Regional Executive Officer (DREO) and a Senior Superintendent of Works.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6117, Temporary Employees, could the Minister explain the increase there from \$155,000 to over \$3.370 million for 2022?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have a relief caretaker at \$74,900 and a maid at \$74,900, and that would take account of the allocation of salaries.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6211, Expenses Specific to the Agency, could the Minister explain what the sum caters for, and why the revised amount exceeds the budgetary allocation for this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not understand the question. Are you asking why the line item exceeds the budgetary allocation? Is that what you are asking?

Mr. Holder: The revised amount exceeds what was budgeted for in 2021. There is \$16,600,000 that is budgeted, but the revised amount is \$17,599,000. I am asking why does it exceed the budgetary allocation?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please let me give some guidance to the Hon. Member. Hon. Member, if I were sitting where you are, I would say that I note that the actual for 2021, exceeded the budget, and this year, we have allocated \$20 million. Could you ask what additional is included here, and why this little variant for last year; because you have to ask with respect to the current allocation, so you could draw a little reference to lay your case. Hon. Minister, you may go ahead.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I guess since you asked me the question, I would have to respond to you.

Mr. Chairman: No, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: I was actually going to say that indeed, we are here on the 2022 Estimates, and I am sorry that the People's National Congress Reform (PNCR) Chairman could not get to that point so quickly. Yes – the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) counsellors – as part of our mandate as a Government to enhance the accountability of its work, we would require them to go out into the fields more often and do much more work on the ground, rather than be elsewhere not doing the people's work, so the allocation, I think, increased to account for that.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Mr. Chairman and thank you, Hon. Minister for that answer. In the same light, could you say why the same amount was not increased for regions that are controlled by the Coalition Government, for example, Region 4 was reduced. It is the same line item and based on his explanation, I am asking... No, no, no, no, no, he gave an explanation...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please.

Mr. Holder: I am asking based on what he just explained, why is there no increase in Region 4, for example, Region 7 has zero, Region 10 is practically unmoved.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you would get an opportunity to ask that question as those regions come up.

Mr. Holder: Respectfully Mr. Chairman, he gave an explanation and...

Mr. Chairman: It is an Hon. Member.

Mr. Holder: The Hon. Minister gave an explanation, so it is in the same light that I am asking him. All right, we will get to Region 4 and Region 7

Mr. Chairman: Exactly.

Mr. Holder: I thought it was wise that we...

Mr. Chairman: Do not allow some people to take you down a different path.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6224, Print and Non-Print Materials, in 2020, the actual amount was \$2.164 million, so there was a budget of \$2.5 million in 2021, but the revised amount here, again, is \$3.5 million, and of course, we are budgeting \$2.7 million in 2022. My question to the Minister is – I am seeing a trend that you are exceeding the budgetary allocation, as a matter of fact, throughout

this Region 2 budget, there are many instances – it a normal practice for your Government to exceed the budgetary allocations for these line items? Is it a normal practice that your Government engage in to exceed the amounts that this National Assembly approves?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we have been in this National Assembly for the better part of 16 months, and I think that led to the elevation of Mr. Shurwayne Holder as the Chairman of the PNCR. Yes, the same person who was a mortuary technician in Region 2 at Suddie Public Hospital, so if anyone wanted clarity, I was referring to the Hon. Member, Mr. Shurwayne Holder. Last year's budget was completed; we are here because we do not have a budget yet approved for 2022, so how could we be exceeding an allocation, we have not yet gotten an approved budget, so I am totally confused as to what you are asking. Are you asking me about the allocation of 2022? We have not yet spent anything, so how are we exceeding?

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I think I was very clear, we are considering *Budget 2022*, but while we are considering that, there are figures here that speaks to 2021, and I see here that your Government exceeded what was allocated to you under this line item. Now, you are budgeting \$2.7 million, so I am interested in knowing if you will spend beyond that \$2.7 million. Once again, this seems to be the trend in this Region 2 allocation, hence my question.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, is it the trend that you will continue to exceed the budgetary allocation in 2022?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I wish to respond as my colleague is hinting to me that Mr. Holder is asking me to confirm whether we will exceed a budget that has not yet been allocated or approved. I do not know how to respond to Mr. Holder and in what way. This is not a mortuary, this is the National Assembly and, living humans are here. To configure an answer for Mr. Holder, the moneys here would cover print and non-print. The fact that we have a bigger budget, we have more work to do, naturally, you would find us having more documentation to process; and necessarily, we have to adequately respond to those requests for print and non-print.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, am I correctly summarising that at this point in time, based on the information that you have, the sums that you are allocating here are what you feel is required for 2022, and you do not have a crystal ball, so you cannot tell the future.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to report too, the budget states that we are requesting less than what was spent in 2021— \$300,000 less and that is Mr. Shurwayne Holder’s contention. Why are we budgeting \$300,000 less; maybe it is because we are much more efficient.

Mr. Mahipaul: Under the same line item, I heard the Hon. Minister saying \$300,000 less, but if I am seeing correctly, it is actually \$800,000 less. I think the clarity we need is that if this is sufficient to cater for this line item in view of what was budgeted for in 2021, but led to an excess spending there, which I assumed happened through a virement. Our contention is if this amount is sufficient for the purpose of print and non-print?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think you answered that, and I also paraphrased you. Mr. Mahipaul, you did not hear us or were you on a different page?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, for some strange reason, my book has missing pages, again, for the third year.

Mr. Chairman: Again, it must be something internal then.

Mr. Mahipaul: I hope not.

Mr. Chairman: Just for my information, I am at page 470, and at 470, the question was asked of line item 6224.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am saying that the Hon. Minister said...

Mr. Chairman: I Just want to clarify that we are on the same page and the same numbers. Last year, \$2.5 million was budgeted, \$3.5 million was expended and now we are allocating \$2.7 million.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, so the difference is 800 and not 500. The Hon. Minister said they budgeted \$300,000 less and I am saying it is \$800,000 less.

2.32 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Let us not quiver over the numbers. We are all on the same page and all of our pages have the same numbers. We could summarise that *Budget 2021* was \$2,500 and *Budget 2022* is \$200,000 more. However, it is \$800,000 less than the amount actually spent in 2021. We are on the same page with the same numbers. Mr. Mahipaul does not have a missing page.

Mr. Mahipaul: (*Inaudible*)

Mr. Chairman: You do?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I do not have page 485 and page 486.

Mr. Chairman: You have a crystal ball. I have not reached there as yet.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am telling you that I have those missing pages.

Mr. Chairman: We will compare notes when we reach page 485.

Mr. Mahipaul: At Region 3, shockingly.

Mr. Chairman: At page 470, we are on the pages with the same numbers. That is what I am establishing. Thank you.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: I am very concerned about the theft of the country's ... In Region 2, I have heard so many stories about the sale of fuel. I am very much concerned about this. I have heard about fuel being sold at Charity wharf and all across the region in the last few months. I was very interested to see what the actual figures would be for 2021. As I perused the ...

Mr. Chairman: You do not have to peruse; you have it before you.

Mr. Holder: Yes, as I perused the budget, I get the sense that there might be some truth to what I am hearing in the streets and so I come to the line item. The actual amount spent on fuel and lube in 2020 was \$3 million. Budgeted in 2021, the budgetary allocation was \$6 million. Now, when you look at the revised amount for 2021, you see almost \$17 million. When you look at *Budget 2022*, they carried it up to \$12.5 million. Could the Hon. Minister explain this drastic increase in fuel and lube? It is line item 6231.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we are also dealing with 'true' stories, 'nancy' stories and the budget item.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, if we have in our House, someone who has been consistently dealing with the dead for a while, you must have 'nancy' stories. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Man Nigel.]

No, not 'man Nigel' me. You all are coming here and wasting the taxpayers' money. This same Hon. Member, Mr. Holder, prior to the 2020 Elections, we have evidence of vouchers where a social cohesion officer in the Ministry of the Presidency then, I do not want to call Ms. Garraway's name, requisitioned I think it is millions of dollars in fuel for them to go and campaign in the Pomeroon.

Mr. Holder: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: I have launched an investigation...

Mr. Holder: Point of order, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Dharamlall: I hope when the investigation is completed, ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister...

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, the Minister is imputing...

Mr. Dharamlall: ...that the Hon. Member, Mr. Holder ...he is ready to face the consequences.

Mr. Holder: ...calling the name of a person who is not here to defend herself...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the Hon. Member is raising a point of order. Hon. Member, Mr. Holder. You do not have to shout above everyone.

Mr. Holder: I apologise but the Hon. Minister was shouting. If he feels that he alone could shout...

Mr. Chairman: You are talking to me. You do not have to shout him down.

Mr. Holder: Sorry, Mr. Chairman. I am guided. Standing Order 41(6), the Hon. Minister is imputing; he is calling names. That person is not here to defend herself, so he should refrain from that.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could we refrain from the speculation. When the evidence is solid, and the cases are unearthed we could present those. Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I want to be very unequivocal. There are vouchers with the name of the social cohesion officer requisitioning fuel in 2020 prior to the general and regional elections.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, very much, for that information.

Mr. Dharamlall: That is under the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC). On the 2022 allocation, last year we had a lot of flooding in Region 2. The Hon. Member who is from Region 2, when his Government was in office it did nothing for farmers. It did nothing to resolve the issues of our farmers. If there is flooding, we have to pump more water out. As the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan would say, *pump more, pump some more*. We have to do more pumping. That is why the fuel allocation. We had to do some virements to get water off of the ground.

It is in that regard and because we want to elevate the circumstances of our farmers in Region 2, the Ministry of Agriculture also has a massive programme to bring more land into production and also to provide better services. We would like to be at the cutting edge of the agricultural sector. We have to make sure that we are, at all times, able to provide optimum services to our farmers.

Mr. Holder: Everything is being blamed on the flood. This entire budget is about flood and Coronavirus disease (Covid-19). There were floods in many other regions – Region 9 and Region 10 for example, but you do not see this being replicated in those regions. I do not buy that answer from the Hon. Minister. Region 4 which has over 300,000 people...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you want to give a remarks contribution, rather than ask a question, I will have to give the same amount of time to the Hon. Minister to respond to your remarks. I would prefer that you ask a question with respect to a particular line item. If I were you, I would not go down to floods all over, because the degree of flooding across all regions are different. We have to establish the degree of flooding. We want to ask questions with respect to the Estimates.

Mr. Holder: I am guided, Mr. Chairman. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if he is willing to layover the specifics on fuel that was allocated with respect to flood in Region 2, on the same line item, if he is willing to layover that information?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, with respect to the fuel allocation used and with respect to pumping out flood waters, you have a couple of options - the Commissioner of Information,

questions to Ministers, and so forth. If you want to ask if he could lay over how this amount is going to be spent this year, I think that is for you.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With respect to the Commissioner of Information, I am not certain exactly what he does for a \$40 million allocation. Nevertheless, I will move on.

Mr. Chairman: If you are not certain, I could help you. There is a constitutional provision and we have passed the Freedom of Information Act which states that any information anyone wants, they could write to the Commissioner of Information, and he will seek that from the relevant agencies. That is his duty.

Mr. Holder: I am guided. I hope that he can give us this information because the Hon. Minister clearly would not. Mr. Chairman, I will move on but on the same line item, sorry, I just want to get it clear from the Hon. Minister, this increase accounts for or can account for about 11,800 gallons of fuel. It can account for that amount – 262 drums of fuel. Is the Hon. Minister saying that that amount was used to assist farmers because of flooding, ‘to pump water’ in his exact words?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have budgeted \$12.515 million for fuel and lubricants. In the administration of Region 2, in addition to farmers, we also help the Amerindian communities. There are nine Amerindian communities in Region 2. Many are in the Pomeroron that we will also provide fuel for their logistics. There are a few lake communities as well, that we also provide support to. I do not understand why the Hon. Member from Region 2, is so concerned that we have budgeted to help the people. I do not understand where his politics is going. He is concerned that we are helping people. What he should really focus on is letting us help people together.

This National Assembly is supposed to be making laws to help our people, including the people of Region 2, people who your Party have totally disconnected itself from, other than bullying people. Now, I am wondering, Mr. Chairman, if when they were campaigning, if the same Hon. Member, Mr. Holder, that I met on the campaign ... They used to go in front of leaders’ homes in Region 2 and say some of the nastiest things. That is how the PNC campaigned in Region 2 – a total embarrassment of Burnham’s legacy.

Mr. Holder: Point of order, Mr. Chairman. His comments are irrelevant to the question.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please. Let us obey the rules of the House. A Member do not just stand. A Member could stand on a point of order. I will assess if it is a point of order. I will give the Member the floor. If it is a point of information, I will have to ask the standing Member if he wants to yield so that you could clarify. Outside of that, I rule. I recognise when you speak. Hon. Member, Mr. Holder.

Mr. Holder: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. I like the answer from the Hon. Minister. He said Region 2 has a number of Indigenous communities. If you look at Region 9 for example, Region 2 has 2,100 square miles and Region 9 has 21,000 with lots of Amerindian communities far and wide. That still does not explain this fuel use, but I will move on.

Line item 6264 speaks to vehicles spares and service. I observed that the actual sum for 2020 was \$2.39 million. The budgeted amount for 2021 was practically the same amount. The actual sum for 2021 was identical to 2020. I am seeing \$2.5 million being proposed here for 2022. I am wondering if the Hon. Minister could say if it is the same item being replaced from time and time again in 2020, 2021 and now there is a little difference in 2022. I want to know if it is the same item being repaired or serviced or if it is the same service being paid for multiple times, year after year?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member Mr. Holder is squabbling over \$200,000. Two new vehicles that were bought in 2021. They are now on the fleet or on the inventory of vehicles in Region 2. They will now comprise part of this item – vehicles spares and service.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6271 – Telephone and internet charges: Again, I see \$2 million being proposed in the 2022 budget but the revised amount, the actual amount that was spent in 2021, is \$942,000. Could the Minister explain why there is an over 100% increase in 2022?

2.47 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, \$2 million budgeted for telephone and internet charges in Region 2 for 2022. That will take account of the different virtual platforms that our staff will use to communicate and get their work done, noting the threats that physical contact places on the wellbeing of our people due to the COVID-19.

Mr. Holder: I would like the Minister to note that COVID-19 has been here since 2020. I do not really see him blaming the increase on COVID-19 on the platform. I move to line item 6294 – Other: Could the Minister disaggregate ‘Other’?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is also a \$136,000 increase that the Hon. Member is questioning. It involves payment of stipends to students who work within the Regional Democratic Council (RDC). These are students from the University of Guyana (UG), Essequibo Technical Institute (ETI) and the technical-work institutions, the stipend for a civil engineer, evaluators and Regional Tender Board (RTB) members and the rental of chairs and tents whenever there are outdoor meetings *et cetera*.

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, is it that the Minister is now thinking about these expenses? Why I say that is because in 2021, they only budgeted \$604,000 but they spent more than double that amount. Then they are coming for more in 2022. I am wondering if it is now that they are considering these stipends and other things. Again, they went over the budget by double the amount in 2021. I want to know if one may end up going over the 2022 budget. If that is the way we do budgets in Region 2 or for the regions, or specifically in your Ministry.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, again, it is \$136,000 that Mr. Holder is wondering over. Is he wondering or wandering or is he doing both wondering and wandering over \$136,000? We were able to get a very brilliant Essequibian on board to be a Civil Engineer as well working with us on a stipend basis. That accounted for a lot of the increases last year which moved from a budgeted \$604,000 to \$1,364,000.

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$272,664,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$24,230,000

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, programme code 1202900 – Buildings – Administration: Could the Minister explain what the sum of over \$16 million will be used for which building?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the annex to State House has been left dilapidated for the last number of years. As a matter of fact... **[An Hon. Member: [Inaudible]]** The annex of State

House. The A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change never allowed many of you to go there. The State House itself where the Regional Executive Officer (REO) was living during the APNU/AFC's time, is like a palace how they have redone it, but it left the annex where the lesser beings would abode to rot. We have to fix the floor. Practically the entire building has to be redone. [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] Yes. That is what it did. When it went to Essequibo, the highfliers stayed in the front building with the security, and you know we call ourselves minions we have to stay at the back. That is how the APNU/AFC was running the Government.

Programme: 721 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$24,230,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$478,898,000

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, line item 6131 – Other Direct Labour Costs: There are all zeros there including on *Budget 2022*, but the revised amount has a sum there. I would like to know if it is not an improper financial transaction, one which may even violate the Fiscal Management and Accountability (FMA) Act for moneys to be spent under this line item when there is zero allocation? Could the Minister answer why there is an amount that was spent under a line item that had zero budgetary allocation? When there is zero, it says to me that there is no provision.

Mr. Chairman: Then there is no question.

Mr. Holder: Nothing is supposed to be spent there. Could the Minister answer?

Mr. Chairman: If there is zero, there is no question either. Hon. Minister, may you prefer a remark?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, to save time, if there is zero there is no answer. I do not know what the question is. It is a 'zero' question.

Mr. Holder: I suspected that would be the answer, but 'transparency' and 'accountability'. I will move on for the sake of time. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** *[Inaudible]* predictable.] Predictable. Zero for zero, yes. Mr. Chairman, imagine one spent money where moneys were not allocated. Let us move on.

Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: Again, I am seeing according to the rumours... I am seeing again a budgeted sum of \$10 million but this time we move to an almost 300% increase in the revised amounts – the amounts that were actually spent. I am speaking about the amount for 2021. Further, they are now proposing even more than that for 2022. Remember the Minister said they pumped water under the line item for finance and administration. I am asking now, why this increase here? One would have expected that one would pumped water under this line item. Now that we are at agriculture, let us go Minister. Kindly explain.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Member in the previous line item was referring to someone – a Ranger – who acted as an Overseer and got \$25,000. That is how he is embarrassing a poor man from Essequibo for \$25,000. Coming to the National Assembly and speaking about transparency for \$25,000. That is the indignity with which they treat poor people in Essequibo.

I have a list here and I will tell you how the allocation has been made for fuel and lubricants. Devonshire Castle pump station, Hampton Court pump station, Anna Regina four-wheel drive and tractor, Anna Regina two-wheel drive, Anna Regina, a new frontend loader. Yes, we are buying a new frontend loader for the farmers and a motor grader. One Hydroflo pump at Three Friends. People must know where their money is being spent. A Hydroflo pump at Charity. A Hydroflo pump at Cozier. Devonshire Castle, two Hydroflo pumps. Hampton Court, Windsor Castle, Lima...

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, a point of clarification...

Mr. Dharamlall: Anna Regina...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister... Yes, Hon. Member Mr. Sears?

Mr. Holder: Mr. Holder not Mr. Sears.

Mr. Chairman: You...

Mr. Holder: Mr. Holder not Mr. Sears. You said Mr. Sears.

Mr. Chairman: My apologies, Mr. Holder.

Mr. Holder: I am interested in the increase. If it is the Minister is saying that those pumps *et cetera* account for the increase, that is all right. But I am not interested in everything that these moneys are spent on. I am saying that you have an increase of nearly 300%. It is that increase...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Holder, you stood on a point of order. You explained that and you are now taking the liberties of again addressing what you said before. We now have to return to the Hon. Minister to allow him an opportunity to answer the question you asked. I do not have a crystal ball, but I think if we add it all up it will come to the increase. Is that what you were going to say, Hon. Minister? You may proceed, Sir.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Taymouth Manor Hydroflo pump, Anna Regina Hydroflo pump, Lima Hydroflo pump, La Union, Capoey, Dawa, four irrigation pumps, a bobcat at the RDC, another motor grader at Abak and four tractors. We also have some motorcycles, as well as four-wheel pickups that would take account of all of this.

Mr. Chairman: You have, as you said, one new piece of equipment added to the list.

Mr. Dharamlall: I said two new pieces.

Mr. Chairman: My apologies. Two new pieces.

Mr. Holder: In 2021, when you budgeted did you not take into account all this different equipment that you just listed? We are speaking about approximately 300% increase in the amount that was actually spent when it is put against what was budgeted. Here they are coming for even more moneys in 2022. Is it that the Minister is saying that these two new pieces of equipment will account for this further increase? What are these pieces of equipment? Where are they located.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I just went at length to say where the pumps are located. It means that... [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] I was saying the same thing that the APNU/AFC has no regard for the farmers. A Member of Parliament (MP) of Region 2 for the APNU/AFC does not know where some of these pumps are in big villages. These are massive pumps.

3.02 p.m.

Something that I think is very elementary which many persons on the Opposition side had failed to do in their planning in the five years they were in Government. That is one of the reasons why

we dissolved this green paper or green paint strategy that they had; the Green State Development Strategy (GSDS). We have now embarked on the extended Low Carbon Development Strategy (LCDS) because we have to, as part of our commitment to managing climate change and the impact of climate change on mitigation and on adaptation. We will have to put resources - to make sure that we are able to better manage the water management within Region 2. We do not want our farmers to be left - where days after then we are trying to figure out where a pump is and how much fuel is necessary to get that pump operational. We are planning to make sure that productivity is increased in Region 2 and the livelihood of our farmers are also optimised.

Mr. Holder: It is very difficult to get a direct answer from the Hon. Minister. For the record, this is 31,500 gallons of fuel... well the money could account for that much fuel and I think I have to ask questions there. I do not see how you could mitigate the effects of climate change by the use of fossil fuels. That is a contradiction by itself.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, the question is how you are going to mitigate climate change with the use of fossil fuel.

Mr. Holder: Moving on...

Mr. Chairman: Again, if you make a speech and ask something within the speech, I will put it to the Hon. Minister. Go ahead and move along, Hon. Member.

Mr. Holder: Line item 6272 – Electricity Charges: Again, in this region, they keep going over the budgeted allocation. This time it - maybe about 2000% or so, from \$350,000 to over \$2.8 million. Now, they are asking for \$2.6 million in 2022. Could the Hon. Minister explain this gross increase in electricity charges?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am advised by the regional staff that they had some arrears that they had to clear in 2021, so the virement to the line item would take account of that increase. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** APNU/AFC (*inaudible*)] Well, it is possible that the officials of APNU/AFC may have not paid those bills. Yes, it is, so thank you, Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul. You probably know that it was going on. They were living in these quarters, using the Government facilities, and were not paying the electricity bills. That is probably why the Guyana Power and Light (GPL) Incorporated is in the situation it is in.

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I really want to go on.

Mr. Chairman: While you search, I saw the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan's microphone on.

Mr. Holder: I will reserve my questions for the other....

Mr. Ramjattan: This is very specific for line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works – \$190 million. This is my question, could the Hon. Minister detail in written form for me and the National Assembly where these maintenance works would be done? I do not want the Hon. Member to rattle them off here and waste our time, just answer in relation to a written document.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister before you speak. Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, I do not think we are wasting time, but 'you might be consuming your time'.

Mr. Ramjattan: Yes, consuming time.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Member. Hon. Minister, could you lay it over in writing?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we are on the Agriculture Programme of Region 2. This is the livelihood of farmers. Mr. Ramjattan, comes to this National Assembly and say that we are wasting time. [**Hon. Members:** Hon. Member.] Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, we could never be wasting the time of farmers.

Mr. Chairman: No. The Hon. Member said, 'instead of'. I do not think that he is inputting that we are wasting time. The Hon. Member is just saying put it in writing so that we do not consume the time with you reading it out.

Mr. Dharamlall: Historically, we have trenches or canals in Region 2. All those canals, 251,232 rods, which is equivalent to 918,906 metres, we have been consistently cleaning, including in the time of the APNU/AFC when Mr. Ramjattan, the Hon. Member, had a denuded Ministry to run, like a half Ministry then. This year we are budgeting \$190 million.

Mr. Ramjattan: Mr. Chairman, you have to use the guillotine here, I think.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, if you want to stand on a point of order, you could.

Mr. Ramjattan: No, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please... The Hon. Member asked for you to lay it over in writing. The Hon. Member was very specific. Hon. Minister, are you doing to do that?

Mr. Dharamlall: I will provide to the National Assembly from Good Hope to Somerset and Berks and manicro areas, we are doing trench cleaning...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we are asking you to lay it over in writing.

Mr. Holder: Mr. Chairman, I have no further question on this.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$478,898,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$146,680,000

Mr. Holder: Project code 4400800 – Other Equipment: There is an amount there of \$75 million for the purchase of equipment. Could the Hon. Minister say how much equipment? What are the equipment? Hon. Minister, give us a brief explanation.

Mr. Dharamlall: A motor grader with a scarifier and a frontend loader.

Programme: 722 – Agriculture – \$146,680,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 723 – Public Works – \$170,625,000

Mr. Holder: Line item 6117 – Temporary Employees: Could the Hon. Minister give us the designation of the temporary staff he is proposing to employ?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is an electrical assistant moved from line item 6113, Other Technical and Craft Skilled to 6117, Temporary Employees, at a salary of \$74,900.

Programme: 723 – Public Works – \$170,625,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 723 – Public Works – \$119,000,000

Mr. Holder: Project code 1100300 – Bridges: Could the Hon. Minister say which bridges would be constructed and where?

Mr. Dharamlall: A reinforced concrete bridge will replace a timber structure. It will be 150 square metres, 25x6.

Mr. Holder: Hon. Member, thanks for the direct answer, for once. Project code 1400500 – Roads: Could the Hon. Minister say which specific roads will this provision cover?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would be happy to do so. We have done a substantial number of roads in Region 2 and we will do more with the Ministry of Public Works as well. But specific to the Regional Democratic Council's (RDC) capital programme for roads, we will be upgrading David James Street in Charity. I know a lot of people in that area have been clamouring for the upgrade of their road, so it would now be upgraded to an asphaltic concrete surface. We would also be upgrading the Damon Street in Dartmouth to an asphaltic concrete surface. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** *(Inaudible)*] APNU/AFC did not do any asphaltic concrete surface in Dartmouth, they did none in five years and they like Dartmouth so much, they have not done a single asphaltic concrete surface; upgrading of Second Street Anna Regina – asphaltic concrete; upgrading of, again, this is another street in one of the APNU/AFC areas, Bridgemohan Street in Queenstown on the Essequibo Coast – asphaltic concrete surface; and the Suddie Market Street, I think it requires a lot of work after many years of dilapidation. An asphaltic concrete surface would also be built there.

Mr. Holder: Hon. Minister, is Baghaj Dam included in that... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Baghaj Dam.] Baghaj Dam. I am certain that you know where Baghaj Dam is. It is in Richmond and has been in a very deplorable state over the last year. I would have liked to hear that street. Is it included or not?

Mr. Chairman: Baghaj dam, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I think that may be the street where the Hon. Member is living. He is batting for himself, and he is not batting for the other people on the Essequibo Coast. That is the kind of selfishness that you all...

Mr. Holder: I am not living there, Mr. Chairman. I live in Henrietta, not Richmond.

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Member, I know where you are living.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, please, if you want to intervene on a point of order, please say so. You do not have the liberty to...

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, hold a second.

Mr. Chairman: No one has the liberty to just press their microphone and begin to speak. That does not happen in the National Assembly. Hon. Members, we have reached the point of exhausting the time for this head. Hon. Minister, do you want to complete and then I would put all the remaining heads?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will have to do more roads. We will have to maintain quite a lot of roads in Essequibo. We have our force account that would be doing a lot of maintenance of many of these roads. Likewise, the Ministry of Public Works, they also will also be doing quite a number of roads in Region 2. Many other roads in addition to what I just mentioned would be constructed.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we have reached the time allocated for the consideration of this agency.

3.17 p.m.

Programme: 723 – Public Works – \$119,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$3,007,746,000

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$3,007,746,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$417,505,000

Programme: 724 – Education Delivery – \$417,505,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$1,305,295,000

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$1,305,295,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$159,000,000

Programme: 725 – Health Services – \$159,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister and your staff of Region 2 for taking us through that Agency.

Hon. Members, we will allow the Minister to get his support staff in place so that we could start Agency 73, Region 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara. As the Minister’s staff gets into place, let me ask Members to turn to pages 484 and 485. Hon. Members, let us turn our attention to Region 3. Let me welcome the Regional Executive Officer (REO) and his staff joining the Minister.

Agency: 73 Region 3: Essequibo Islands/West Demerara

Current Expenditure

Programmes: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$280,247,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Cde. Chairman, it is most unfortunate for the third time that I have missing pages in my book. I am at page 484, and it jumps to page 487.

Mr. Chairman: Are you saying you do not have page 484?

Mr. Mahipaul: I do not have pages 485 and 486. I did ask for some assistance. It seems as though the assistance has arrived.

Mr. Chairman: Does that mean that you did not get a chance to study the estimates and you do not have any questions?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I have the ability to construct questions impromptu. I want to begin with line item 6117, Temporary Employees, I see it has jumped from 2 to 28. May I ask why is there the need for so many temporary employees, and if it is not better for these staff to be considered and placed in the permanent employment of the Regional Administration and Finance Programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we have 28 temporary employees, and they are in the process of being regularised through the recruitment system of the Government.

Mr. Mahipaul: If I am hearing accurately, the Hon. Minister is indicating that it has these employees as temporary employees awaiting confirmation to be on the fixed establishment of the system within the Regional Administration for Finance Programme. Could the Hon. Minister clarify that? I did not hear him clearly.

Mr. Dharamlall: We cannot allow the services of the Government to be shut down by deliberate attempts of elements or utensils of the last Government. We have in place six typist clerks, one administrative assistant, four clerk II, one secretary, two vehicle drivers, an electrical technician, one office assistant and two accounts clerks at that level.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, may I ask if the employment of these staff on the fixed establishment is stymied because of the Public Service Commission (PSC) not being in place to facilitate the hiring of these staff?

Mr. Dharamlall: I cannot speak for the Public Service Commission. I know in the last Government a Minister was chastised publicly and I think also lost a court matter of the Government when he/she directed the Public Service Commission. We will not direct the Public

Service Commission. We will await when the Public Service Commission is ready to properly appoint these employees. We will await that.

Mr. Mahipaul: Cde. Chairman, may I ask what method was used to employ these staff; if there was an advertisement and persons applied, were interviewed and the likes before they were considered to be staff of this programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, there are two things. In the Ministry that I am the Minister of, there is no evidence of Mr. Mahipaul, Hon. Member having gone through a recruitment process to be a community development officer of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development. I shudder to think that he is now taking an about turn asking about what recruitment process a clerk, a secretary and a driver went through. These are people who earn \$74,000/\$75,000 per month when Mr. Mahipaul was earning in excess of two hundred and something thousand dollars per month having gone through not a single recruitment process. He was a handpicked element of the last Regime and disposed of in Region 3. As far as I am advised, these persons went through a proper recruitment process and as soon as the PSC or whichever other body has to ratify their appointment, they will remain temporary until such time.

Mr. Mahipaul: When I was employed, I was employed as a contracted employee. The claim that I was handpicked is one that I believe is imputing because I do not believe I was handpicked.

Mr. Chairman: What is it imputing?

Mr. Mahipaul: It is imputing that I was handpicked. and The Hon. Member is trying to paint me as someone who was handpicked for a position. The Hon. Minister indicated that the employment of these staff went through the proper recruitment process. I am knowledgeable that the establishment that is legal and guiding this country in terms of employment is the Public Service Commission for the fixed establishment, where the vacancies are created through the Ministry of the Public Service and the likes.

May I ask what is the proper recruitment procedure that was utilised by the Regional Administration and Finance Programme to recruit these individuals? It has nothing to do with who is a driver, who is a typist and who is a clerk. It has to do with the proper system being followed,

affording the opportunity to all to exercise that right to apply and to be employed properly in the system. May I ask what system was used?

Mr. Chairman: Before I ask the Hon. Minister to comment, I want to ask the Hon. Minister of the Public Service to comment because we may have this reoccurring over and over again. I know that at certain levels; the level of staffing which the Hon. Minister just mentioned, the authority was given to the regional executive officers and Permanent Secretaries (PSs) to hire at these levels. Is that still in place?

Minister of the Public Service [Ms. Parag]: It is, please Sir. Also, my Friend, the Hon. Mahipaul mentioned that he was a contracted employee but did not deny that he might have not gone through a process of an advertisement. The Ministry of the Public Service is also tasked with looking at Curriculum Vitae (CVs), conducting interviews and so is the region to carry out that. That is also a proper recruitment process to employ by contract.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you. For these persons who are drivers and clerks to get on the fixed establishment, do they have to go through the Public Service Commission which is not in place?

Ms. Parag: They will go through the Public Service Commission so long as the post is vacant, and the recommendation is made to the PS.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: I think there is a rabblouser in the House that is making noise directly opposite me. I think the Hon. Minister of the Public Service has adequately responded.

Mr. Mahipaul: My contention is that the Ministry of the Public Service creates the vacancy before it could be filled. If the vacancy does not exist, then I find it difficult understanding how it is being filled. Perhaps, my question should be, are these vacancies new vacancies that were created and are awaiting the approval of the Public Service Commission for permanent employment, or are these vacancies that existed and required to be filled through the Public Service Commission but were filled temporarily by selected persons awaiting the Public Service Commission to come into play where it will advertise and the likes?

Mr. Chairman: I think I have to return to the Hon. Minister of the Public Service. My understanding is that establishments have a certain number of positions which are approved.

Ms. Parag: Correct please, Mr. Chairman. There is an inventory of positions. There is a structure to every ministry or agency and that structure has a certain number of positions within. If there is a creation or filling, it could be from scratch or it could be adding to a number that is already there. Either way, they have to come through the Ministry of the Public Service to be created and filled. I am not disputing what the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul is saying. However, he was asking a specific question as to whether persons are handpicked *et cetera*, and the process of recruitment which is still with the Ministry of the Public Service and the PSC. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** *[Inaudible]*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, please, the Minister of the Public Service was asked to clarify policy positions so that we may be efficiently using the time rather than consuming the time with rhetoric answers.

Mr. Dharamlall: I also am grateful for the clarification provided by the Minister of the Public Service. I want to state, again for the record two things. There is no evidence of any recruitment process that was followed when Hon. Member, Ganesh Mahipaul worked in the Ministry of Communities under A Partnership For National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) as a community development officer earning over \$200,000 per month plus allowances. As a matter of fact, he was earning that whilst being a Member of Parliament as well. For a number of months, Mr. Mahipaul was earning close to \$500,000 per month. Mr. Mahipaul, [**Mr. Mahipaul:** It is Hon. Member.] Hon. Member is imputing and denigrating the circumstances of the poor people, which many of them are young people, in Region 3. They (APNU/AFC) did not employ young people in Region 3.

3.32 p.m.

They have no evidence of employing anyone in Region 3. These are people who are earning \$74,000 to \$75,000 per month. Mr. Mahipaul has a problem with young people in Region 3 being employed to run the affairs of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) of Region 3. I find that very outrageous.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$280,247,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members we could turn to page 681.

Mr. Dharamlall: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, Mr. Dharamlall, please... We are now at page 681.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$21,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1208700 – Buildings - Administration: This \$17 million is for the extension of buildings and the regional store. Which building is the extension for? I would like to know if it is a building in the compound of the regional store. Which building is it?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, one set speaks for itself. It is the regional store at Crane and the Regional Administrative Office.

Mr. Mahipaul: What is it?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is the Regional Administrative Office.

Programme: 731 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$21,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us turn to pages 486 and 487 and give the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul an opportunity to correlate that he has those pages, and they have numbers on them. Are you okay there, Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul with your pages?

Mr. Mahipaul: Which pages?

Mr. Chairman: They are pages 486 and 487.

Mr. Mahipaul: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Do you have two books and all two have missing pages?

Mr. Mahipaul: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: It is three books.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$518,287,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. Cde. Chairman, under this Programme 732, Agriculture, may I look at line item 6252 - Maintenance of Bridges; and request the Minister to inform this House of where are these bridges that will be maintained, in terms of their locations, please?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, one will be at Good Hope, one will be at Greenwich Park, and one will be at Ruby/Orangestein.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6255 – Maintenance of Other Infrastructure: May I ask what are the other infrastructure that requires the \$27 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: The other infrastructures will be the Hubu River Sluice, the Salem River Sluice, the Naamryck River Sluice, the Parika River Sluice, the Versailles River Sluice, the Tuschen River Sluice, the Zeelugt River Sluice, the Strik en Heuvel River Sluice, the Hague River Sluice, the Den Amstel River Sluice, the Blankenburg River Sluice, Windsor Forest River Sluice and Goed Fortuin River Sluice.

Mr. Mahipaul: Line item 6253 speaks to the Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works. I am aware that this caters for a number of canals and so on to be cleaned and cleared. I see, however, that there is an increase from \$247 million to \$347 million. It is an increase of \$100 million. This indicates to me that there is an addition to the number of canals and drains that will be cleaned. All I want to know here is if there is an increase in the rate per rod and if the Minister will be kind enough to layover in writing a list of the canals to be cleared and cleaned?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we have 192,147 metres of canals to be cleared. The rates have not been increased but we have additional canals that will be cleared.

Mr. Mahipaul: Mr. Chairman, will the Minister be kind enough to layover the list of the canals to be cleared and cleaned?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I have them on me and the Hon. Member could come to the Ministry and peruse them. I will not...

Mr. Chairman: I did not hear you. You will not what?

Mr. Dharamlall: I will not lay them over. They are for public consumption at the RDC.

Mr. Mahipaul: Could I come for it?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Hon. Member could go there or to the Ministry.

Mr. Mahipaul: I thank the Hon. Minister for the invitation to visit the Ministry to see the list. Might I remind him that when I was there I was chased out by a security guard, but I guess that has been removed now.

Mr. Chairman: Was it by a security guard?

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes. It was by a security guard.

Mr. Chairman: That is preposterous.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you. I am grateful for the invitation now. I will move on from there, Sir.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$518,287,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$131,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1300800 – Agricultural Development - D & I: There is \$110 million that speaks to the provision for drainage structures and revetments at Leguan, Morashee, Ladystein, Canal Number 1 Polder, La Parfaite Harmonie, Hubu and Maripa. I see payment of retention. This is an ongoing project from 2021. May I ask what is the percentage of completion

for these drainage structures and revetments at these locations? Do we foresee them being completed this year based on the percentages at which they are right now?

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, there is something ethical with what I want to say. That is, as Project Management professionals we do not believe in, per cent complete. Genuinely, one cannot measure the per cent completed. Just for the record, Mr. Mahipaul this project is completed. It is basically to pay during the retention period.

Mr. Mahipaul: May I ask if the \$110 million is the retention cost? Sir, with your permission before the Hon. Minister answers, are these provisions for drainage structures and revetments at Leguan new projects? Are these new projects at Leguan, Morashee, Ladystein, Canal Number 1 Polder, La Parfaite Harmonie, Hubu, and Maripa?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we are doing revetment work at Thierens, Leguan. It is a timber revetment. There will be a timber revetment at Morashee. We are doing a concrete structure for drainage and revetment at Ladystein. This is on the East Bank of Essequibo. At Zeelandia in Wakenaam, we are doing a concrete koker. In Canal Number 1 Polder we are also doing a concrete drainage structure and revetment. We are doing a drainage structure and revetment at La Parfaite Harmonie. This time we are doing a timber revetment at Hubu and another one at Maripa.

Mr. Mahipaul: I am not sure if I am getting this correct. I asked just now for the percentage of the work completed for these specific projects. I was guided by a Project Manager apparently, who spoke to measured works in terms of completion. I heard the Minister respond by saying that these works are completed. I am seeing here that the planned duration speaks from the 1st January to 31st December, 2022. If these works are completed based on his previous answer, then I need to know why this huge sum, which is basically speaking to the rehabilitation of a koker at Zeelandia. Perhaps what will be easier, is for him to disaggregate the payment for retention, the rehabilitation of the koker at Zeelandia, and the provisions for these drainage structures and revetments.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, with your permission, I said the first one was the retention, repaid at \$1.197 million. I do not understand how...Like seriously, you all have a problem with comprehension. [**An Hon. Member:** Tell him which part of President College (PC) he went.] I went in the first batch. The most brilliant people in the country went there. Which school did you go to? [**Mr. Mahipaul:** You said all were completed.] You went by *Slant Eye's* house.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes. I am sorry, Mr. Chairman. These other eight projects are all new. As the Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul asked, the revetment in Georgia is a retention sum that has to be paid. I do not understand what the drama is. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** You said all were completed.]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, you asked a question, and you will get an opportunity to do a follow-up. Please, if you continue to shout, I am going to have to ask you to withdraw for the rest...

Mr. Dharamlall: The prima donna behaviour of Mr. Mahipaul leaves much to be desired.

Mr. Chairman: The Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul has no more questions.

Programme: 732 – Agriculture – \$131,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$218,504,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Cde. Chairman, from line item 6111, Administrative to line item 6117, Temporary Employees, I see there is a reduction in staff, specifically for Other Technical and Craft Skilled which has moved from four to zero. The sum of money here is higher than what was budgeted for 2021. Will the Minister be kind enough to indicate if there is a competent human resource to see the effective management of these funds for the work it is intended to do, especially for the technical aspect and the field operation that will be necessary – visiting, monitoring, and ensuring that the Bill of Quantities (BoQ) is satisfied and the likes?

3.47 p.m.

Mr. Dharamlall: I see an allocation of zero under Other Technical and Craft Skilled.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, could you please repeat the line item? The Minister is seeing zero.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I was asking about line items 6116 – 6117 that speak to the entire staff complement of the programme where I see a reduction in total. I am asking if the technical capacity

is sufficient to see the expenditure, given that it is an increase from what was budgeted for in 2021 and from what was spent in 2021, taking into account that this programme requires a lot of field operations, visiting sites, monitoring, ensuring bills of quantities are met and satisfied and having the human resource to ensure that the oversight is there so that we get value for money.

Mr. Chairman: Does the personnel covered in line item 6116 have the technical strength to oversee this level of programme?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, according to the staffing details, there is no personnel under line item 6116, Contracted Employees. I do not know what question Mr. Mahipaul is asking. There were 11 staff in 2021 and we are now having nine. If, however, Mr. Mahipaul wants to know if we would be able to execute the work programme, I can assure him, yes, we would be able to execute it.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, there is an allocation under line item 6116 of \$100,000. There is an allocation under 6117 of \$1,168,000. There are two monetary allocations.

Mr. Mahipaul: I was going there, Sir. Thank you for the clarification.

Mr. Chairman: Here, we have to deal with the estimate before us. So, maybe, the question from the Hon. Member should have been, if you have no staff, what are you paying and who are you paying?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is \$100,000 and I am advised that the service man who was contracted may also still be owed at this point.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I need further guidance on that. Your document that you produced, your budget that you put together, 'you' meaning the regional administration, gave us a document that states that no staff is there, and this is a statutory payment that speaks to staffing details, so you pay based on the amount...

[Disruption in audio]

Mr. Dharamlall: ...a \$100,000. This is a service man. I keep saying this about these highflyers in the Opposition; they do not care about poor people. This person's gratuity could have been paid this year; maybe, that is why they are there, but their contract came to an end during... **[Mr.**

Mahipaul: You need to tell us that. Tell us if it is the gratuity.] Maybe that is why. I am advised by the Regional Executive Officer (REO) that that could have been the situation where \$100,000 is on this line item but there is no staff because it could have been gratuity that is owed to the staff.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, the REO is the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the chief administrator of all these programmes. We cannot have an answer that could be or should be. We are expecting an answer that verifies the amount of money that is placed there. In the document before us, we are seeing that there is no staff there. We do not want to hear that it could be, should be or may be. We need to have a definitive answer as to what the \$100,000 is there for.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you can, again, be definitive.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am very definitive. The service man's contract expired at the end of last year and he was owed gratuity on the contract.

Mr. Chairman: You made provisions for the gratuity.

Mr. Dharamlall: That is why it has to be budgeted.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much. I heard that too.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you for the definitive answer now. Earlier, I heard maybe, should be or could be. Line item 6251: the people of Den Amstel and the people of La Parfaite Harmonie asked me, where there are existing roads that are in a deplorable state, to find out if their roads would be considered for maintenance work. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if there are roads in the community of Den Amstel and the community of La Parfaite Harmonie for maintenance work.

Mr. Dharamlall: The entire road programme of the Government is dealt with by both the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and the Ministry of Public Works. The roads that were not budgeted under the overseer of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development are budgeted under the maintenance of the Ministry of Public Works. I can assure you that we have roads in La Parfaite Harmonie as well as in Den Amstel for maintenance, as we would have in almost all of the villages of Region 3.

Mr. Mahipaul: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell me the bridges that are for maintenance work to the tune of \$55 million and, specifically, would he say if First Street, La

Parfaite Harmonie, the entrance from Canal No.1 Polder, the first bridge, are down for maintenance or would they be considered for new structures completely? They are in a very, very deplorable state.

Mr. Dharamlall: Could he just repeat? Is it the entrance bridges to Canal No. 1 and La Parfaite Harmonie?

Mr. Mahipaul: No, it is the entrance bridge from Canal No.1 into La Parfaite Harmonie, the first bridge. When you jump over, there are two bridges there. Both are in a deplorable state. I am asking if those are up for consideration for maintenance or will they get two new structures there? That is to go into 1st Street down to 16th Street, La Parfaite Harmonie.

Mr. Dharamlall: If they are new structures, then they would not be considered under the maintenance programme. They would be considered under the capital programme. It is our intention to have comprehensive maintenance across the region. Whilst we have allocated resources to some of these bridges, we would also have to seek additional resources, during the course of the year, if we have to do work on those bridges that you spoke about. So far, we have bridges in Waterloo, Leguan, Stewartville, Kawall Bridge, Phoenix, Leguan, Hydronie and another bridge in Canal No.2. This is based on the resources we have, but also the Ministry of Public Works do quite a lot of work on these main structures too.

Mr. Mahipaul: I do remember that the Hon. Gail Teixeira, when we were examining the constitutional agencies, indicated that the Ministry of Finance was generous enough to give more moneys than what they asked for. I would just hope that the Ministry of Finance, through the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, would be generous enough to provide the resources for these bridges. They are in a very, very deplorable state.

With reference to Maintenance of Other Infrastructure to the tune of \$18 million, may I ask what are the other infrastructures, please?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, it would be at Crane, Ruby, Westminster and Belle West. We have a fence at Crane; a fence at Vreed-en-Hoop; landscaping and backfilling in Ruby; repairs to the multipurpose centre ground in Westminster and, similarly, in Belle West, the multipurpose facility there.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$ 218,504,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$255,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project Code 1100400 – Bridges: Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say if all these bridges that are listed for work here...The project entails construction of bridges at Leguan, Leonora, Wakenaam, Parika, Hague, Boerasarie and Met-en-Meerzorg. What are the types of bridges that would be constructed?

Mr. Dharamlall: President Ali has made a commitment to the people of Guyana that all of the infrastructure would be upgraded in our country. That is why one would find a lot of the bridges that are made of timber, we will now be constructing in reinforced concrete with composite steel. There is the Anna Maria bridge in Leguan, the motion bridge at Leonora, Sarah and Belle Plaine in Wakenaam, in Parika the reinforced concrete bridge at the façade, Duke Street in Hague, the reconstruction of the Boerasarie Creek bridge that leads into De Kinderen, and the construction of a heavy-duty concrete bridge at Met-en-Meerzorg.

Mr. Mahipaul: For emphasis, I must say that the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) had started to move from timber bridges to reinforced concrete. I am happy that the Ministry and the Regime are now following in the APNU/AFC footsteps for these reinforced concrete bridges.

Sir, I had the privilege...and I still have roots in Wakenaam. I also used to live in Leonora also. So, I know these areas very well. The specific bridge that the Hon. Minister is speaking to at Sarah in Wakenaam, the one in Leonora, the one in Met-en-Meerzorg and the one for Boerasarie, I am well aware of those bridges. In fact, I came from Region 3...Yesterday, when I was missing from the House, I was actually in Region 3. I know that these bridges are not in a deplorable state when compared to the bridges at La Parfaite Harmonie that I referenced earlier. I would like to ask the Minister if he could reconsider this allocation for these bridges and include them, if not for maintenance, at least the construction of a stronger structure there so as to assist the residents in the La Parfaite Harmonie area who are complaining bitterly for better bridges.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would you consider relooking and reallocating?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a process if one wants to reallocate. If it is that the engineering sense of Mr. Mahipaul, who said he was in Region 3 yesterday but when he was leaving, he told me he was going to Enmore to drink rum... I do not know where Mr. Mahipaul went but he was not in the Parliament. That is what I know for a fact. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** When did I tell you that, Mr. Dharamlall?] We will consider. I made that commitment earlier when the question was asked. Maintenance is continuous, and we will look at all the structures.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mahipaul, this is referring to you attending Parliament from the people.

Mr. Mahipaul: Pardon me?

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead.

Mr. Mahipaul: The Hon. Member put on the records of this House that I indicated to him that I was going to Enmore to drink rum. I would like to say that that is inaccurate, it is very untruthful, and I will request of him to withdraw or ask...

Mr. Chairman: Could you repeat what you said, excluding “untruthful”?

Mr. Mahipaul: It is very inaccurate; I believe it is mischievous and should be withdrawn from the records of the House because it is not the truth. If he is refusing, Sir, I am asking if you can please expunge it on the basis that I am standing defending that it is not true.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, do you know a different truth than the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul?

Mr. Dharamlall: No, Mr. Chairman, I was standing in the lobby upstairs and Mr. Mahipaul told me so.

Mr. Chairman: I tried to establish the facts and fight with the facts, but it was hard to establish the facts.

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I guess in the afterlife I will be in heaven, and he will be in hell.

4.02 p.m.

With reference to project code 1400600, Roads, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say what type of roads will be constructed and what are the types of roads to be rehabilitated, if it is asphaltic concrete or the other types that exist?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are two retentions at Uitvlugt and Goed Intent, and then there are six other roads. These would be upgraded to asphaltic concrete in some cases. Well, in all cases they will be upgraded to asphaltic concrete. Those roads will be in Shivanie Street, Zeelugt North, Second Street, Groenveldt, also in Cornelia Ida at the road to the community Centre Ground, Masjid Street in Clairmont, Leguan, the Harlem Factory Road in Harlem, West Coast Demerara (WCD), and Goed Fortuin Squatting Area Road. We will also be doing those in asphaltic concrete.

Programme: 733 – Public Works – \$255,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 734 - Education Delivery – \$4,408,187,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Under line item 6284, would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say... I must say that this is like a recurring decimal. Line item 6284, the heading of this line item is “Other”, very broad, and it carries some huge sums of moneys in all of the ministries. It is very, very worrisome. I must say that. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to expand and probably disaggregate this \$174 million? If the Hon. Minister could do it in writing, lay it over to the National Assembly, in the interest of time so that we do not consume too much time and not get to move to the other programme, I would appreciate that.

Mr. Chairman: Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, I am asking if you could give us an indication of what line items 6284 and 6294 cover, in general, so it does not become a rhetorical question, to which we all know the answer. Again, we state, that many of us have been in this House for decades and we know what they cover, but knowing that there are a lot of first timers, in spite of the fact that they are very qualified and perhaps

experienced, maybe you could refresh everyone's memory with respect to line items 6284 and 6294.

Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance [Dr. Singh]:

Let me, first of all, say that these are long and well established. The Government's chart of accounts has been long and well established; it has been in place for a long time. There have been, from time to time, discussions about whether we should, at some point in time, revisit the chart of accounts. But the existing chart of accounts has been in place for a very long time. The 6284 and 6294 categories under "Other Goods and Services Purchased" and "Other Operating Expenses", respectively, are intended to be miscellaneous categories that are actually defined in documentation that we have produced in the Ministry of Finance that describes the chart of accounts. For example, in relation to line item 6284, I am in possession of a document here that gives some examples. It states that line item 6284 represents other goods and services purchased, and it gives an inexhaustive range of examples: other goods and service-related activities that are not categorised above but are directly related to the operations of the agency and are provided by people outside of the agency, for example, payment for legal fees, payment of bank charges, *et cetera*. It is an inexhaustive list.

In the case of line item 6294, we are speaking of other operating expenses, and it includes, here again, expenses that are not explicitly categorised by any other line item but for which expenditures have to be incurred, for example, stipend for work students and hosting of receptions, *et cetera*. These are inexhaustive examples. I think there is an accumulation of experience in this National Assembly, notwithstanding your observation about the newness of some Members of Parliament (MPs), of the kinds of things that are covered. I have offered some examples. We would be happy to offer others at some point in time, but I think this interrogation of the estimates also provides an important opportunity to interrogate these line items and to get a sense of the kinds of things that are included there. I hope that was helpful, Sir.

Mr. Chairman: Very helpful, Hon. Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance. I just want to add that the Clerk, the Parliamentary Management Committee (PMC) and I are working with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) to bring a training programme, where the CPA will bring experts here, in the second week of May. It is an in-person training programme for all Members of Parliament. We are still working on the

details. The dates have been finalised; we are now working on the details. That is just to let Members know that opportunities will be here to get some further training.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to my colleague, Dr. Ashni Singh. One hundred and eighty-nine sweeper cleaners will be paid from this allocation. That will amount to almost \$144 million out of this \$174 million. There is also supervision of the national assessments at the primary level and at the secondary level as well. There is also the supervision of national exams, the Caribbean Secondary Entrance Certificate (CSEC) and the Caribbean Advanced Proficiency Examination (CAPE)—those are secondary— supervision of education management exams, the supervision of the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) exams, stipend for deaf trainers... [**An. Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] You should be the last person to say that people are dunce over here. Which school did you go to? You did not even go to school. You went to a Community High School. The regional awards ceremony, the provision of some types of sanitary services, management of the truancy campaign, and stipends for work study students... Possibly, I would recommend Mr. Mahipaul to attend that CPA training.

Mr. Mahipaul: Perhaps, what I am very grateful for is a good memory, and I remember when we were considering the Office of the Prime Minister, it was Programme 021, the Prime Minister's Secretariat, on page 85, when we were examining 'Other', the answer that came was for the provision of five advisors for \$26.5 million. I am sure the *Hansard* can bear me out. I also know that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation did indicate under its line item of 6284 that it catered for legal fees. I did not hear the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance speak to those headings. Our questioning, Sir, has to do primarily with this large sum and how it is being used in the Budget. That is why I asked for the disaggregation, but I am grateful that you asked for that explanation and for the training that is expected. On that basis, I trust I will get back my couple minutes that were utilised and I will....

Mr. Chairman: There was actually five minutes added for the explanations. I have been very generous.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$4,408,187,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$277,000,000

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 1203000 Buildings – Education: There is a sum of \$220,000,000 for the provision of schools, dormitories and payment of retention. I see in the Legend that it speaks to a nursery school at Hydronie and a primary school at Zeelugt. I must say that the Coalition welcomes any form of development when it comes to education. We believe an educated nation will be a rich nation. However, when it comes to the primary school at Zeelugt, is this a primary school that will be in Zeelugt New Housing Scheme? Which part of Zeelugt New Housing Scheme will this be in, if that is the area?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is the demolition and reconstruction and so it will practically be a new school, the Zeelugt Primary School

Mr. Mahipaul: Is it at the same location?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, it is at the same location. We will also be constructing a nursery school at Hydronie and we will be doing an extension to the dormitory at Cornelia Ida.

Mr. Mahipaul: Project code 2401700 – Land and Water Transport: “Purchase of vehicle and engine.” I know there exists boats and engines in the region, specifically to help not only with Education Programme but with the Health Programme also, primarily. This new bus that we are expecting to purchase, is this to add to the fleet of David ‘G’ buses so that transportation could be enhanced for our school children and ease the pressure in this high cost of living that there is right now?

Mr. Dharamlall: The engine is for Lanaballi, which has a boat already. There are 34 students in this community that will use this boat. The school has a boat already, donated by a businessman, and we are providing an engine for that boat. Regarding the purchase of a bus, students within the West Bank area of Westminster, Patentia, and La Venture Secondary schools, they are the ones who will benefit from the use of this bus.

Mr. Mahipaul: May I ask if it is a 15-seater bus, a 30-seater bus, or one of those big buses like the David ‘G’ buses that are across the region to help in the transportation of our students?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I do not know of any David ‘G’ buses in Region 3 and so I do not know what Hon. Member Mr. Mahipaul is speaking about. If it is that David ‘G’, as the Attorney General is saying, is a brand of bus, or if it is that the former cardboard...is it the cardboard? Is it a piece of cardboard? I need some clarification on the David ‘G’ buses, Mr. Chairman. There are no David ‘G’ buses in Region 3.

4.17 p.m.

What I know is that the taxpayers’ money, as long as we use it...we do not have buses emblazoned with the name of any cardboard President. We have a real President, and we are doing real work. **[An. Hon. Member: [Inaudible]]** Mr. Chairman, I would just like to indulge you for a second. The Secretary of the Guyana’s Teachers Union (GTU), Ms. Coretta McDonald, says the most horrible and some of the nastiest things in this House. For a young lady or young looking...well, not young looking...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we are going to have to not allow you to go down that road. Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Cde. Chairman. There exist two David ‘G’ buses in Region 3...

Mr. Chairman: The question has to be with respect to the provision here.

Mr. Mahipaul: Yes, it is with respect to the buses...

Mr. Chairman: Are you asking if the bus purchased will be labelled David ‘G’?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, if you will allow me to ask the question, I must say that the question is based on the bus that is going to be purchased. I am saying to you, Sir, there already exist two David ‘G’ buses that were given by the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC), one that is plying the West Bank and one that is plying the West Coast for the benefit of children. I am happy to know, now, that the Government is adding another bus to the David ‘G’ complement to assist in transporting children. My question was and it stands, is the bus a 15-seater, a 30-seater, or one that is as big as the David ‘G’ that can fetch more than 30 children to school?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, would you like to answer that question again?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I want to be very clear that there are no David 'G' buses in Region 3; absolutely none. There is no evidence of any David 'G' bus. There may be buses in the Region, but I do not know which brand is David 'G'. I know when I was in Opposition... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** It is the yellow and green one.] ...there were some David 'G' buses that used to blow smoke and chase mosquitoes in some villages in different parts of the country. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Well, at least it was helping where the Ministry is failing.] This bus is 26-seater bus, and it will be for students, like I said, within that West Demerara catchment.

Programme: 734 – Education Delivery – \$277,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, turn to pages 492 and 493. I am adding back five minutes as we are now at 7.19 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$2,145,531,000

Mr. Mahipaul: As I indicated earlier, I was in Region 3 yesterday. Under line item 6221, that speaks to Drugs and Medical Supplies...I had the opportunity of visiting some health centres and the West Demerara Regional Hospital.

Mr. Chairman: Did the security not stop you?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I have privileges in that region.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Thank you.

Mr. Mahipaul: They all know me to be one of the good staff that came from them and then they were begging for us to come back. I assured them that the APNU/AFC will return to office. There were complaints by a number of patients with reference to receiving adequate supplies of drugs and medical supplies after it was prescribed by the doctor. When they went to the counter, they had difficulties receiving and, in some cases, there were extreme shortages. This figure that is allocated here, is it sufficient to supply the medical facilities in the region, taking into account that there are complaints about shortages?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is a history as to why we have allocated resources of this magnitude for drugs and medical supplies. I visited, as an Opposition Member of Parliament, the West Demerara Regional Hospital in the period of the David 'G' and in the period when Mr. Mahipaul, the Hon. Member, was a Community Development Officer (CDO) of Region 3. That hospital did not have x-ray films; that hospital did not have surgical gloves and a pair of surgical gloves was a couple of hundred dollars; that hospital did not have Panadol; it did not have aspirin; and it did not have very basic things. Do you know what, Mr. Chairman? Billions of dollars were expended for the procurement of drugs and medical supplies during the last Government. That is one of the investigations we will have to proceed with in the near future. Many people may have died as a result of the negligence of the last Administration. For very basic things, people could not have gotten proper service.

Also, only recently, over a billion-dollar worth of expired drugs from the last Administration we had to dispose of at the Haags Bosch sanitary landfill. If they are speaking about management of the health sector, this is probably the best time where the management of the health sector is concerned in Guyana. We are going to build a new hospital. I want to reiterate the Minister of Health. We will build a new and modern hospital in Region 3. We are going to upgrade the West Demerara Regional Hospital. We have already upgraded the Leonora Hospital, which will be commissioned very shortly. Everywhere we go in all of the 100 plus facilities in Region 3, patients are feeling much better. I visited in the last period of the APNU/AFC where old women, mothers and pregnant women had to sit in the sun awaiting service at some of these facilities. Some of the worse treatments they received were under the APNU/AFC in the last Government. You should be last people to speak about your service in the health sector.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, I just have about a minute and a half remaining on the added time.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you, Sir. Sir, I just want to assure you that the people of Region 3 are very uncomfortable with the health sector in that region, and they have assured me that they will vote for the Coalition the next time around, again, as they did before. Sir, I want to ask this final question on current expenditure and, hopefully, you will give me the permission to ask one question on the capital expenditure. I would like to ask the Hon. Minister if there is consideration in this Coronavirus disease (COVID- 19) pandemic...this relationship between the health services

programme and the education programme...if there considerations under this line item for medical supplies in terms of the normal things that are necessary for the protection of our children and teachers and so on. The sum under education was too small to ask that question.

Mr. Dharamlall: In this Government, we work as a team. In this Cabinet, under Dr. Irfaan Ali, we work as a team. I cannot account for what happened in the last Government, but from public knowledge, they did not work as a team, and maybe that is why they had so many problems in the last Government. I can assure you that the Ministry of Health is working with all other Ministries across the Government to make sure that all of the supplies that have to be provided are provided. I am aware, too, that both the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education work very closely to make sure that our schools are in some sanctified position for our students.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$2,145,531,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$214,000,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul, you have the floor.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you very much for your consideration, Sir, in allowing me to ask this question under capital expenditure, notwithstanding the time being exhausted. With reference to the project that entails the purchasing of an ambulance and a bus under project code 2401700, Land and Water Transport, I know that the people of Wakenaam and Leguan have been clamouring, for the past two to three years, for assistance in terms of ambulance service. I am asking if this ambulance will be put on one of those islands for consideration and the bus that will be purchased, what will be the purpose of the bus? I am aware that the health services department have about three or four buses that are often times now being used by the Administration instead of the health services department.

Mr. Dharamlall: I overheard...was it the Hon. Member, Mr. Mahipaul who drove the pick-up overboard from the health services department? Did you drive a white pick-up overboard? That is the kind of management of the APNU/AFC – overboard. This ambulance would be allocated to

the Leonora Hospital, and it will complement the fleet that we have. We will now have five ambulances in the region, and I believe we can deploy one of those in one of the islands.

Programme: 735 – Health Services – \$214,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, that concludes our consideration of this agency. Hon. Minister, I thank you and your REO and staff for taking us through that agency.

Hon. Members, we are at Region 4, one agency before we should have taken a break. We are not going to be taking this first break. The Clerk has made arrangements so that there are snacks available for Hon. Members. So, you can step in and out, remain online virtually if you want, enjoy, refresh and come back. We will take the dinner break at 7.30 p.m. Hon. Members, we have had, with respect to employment policy and also line items 6284 and 6294, some generic explanations of those heads. I entertained it so that we may be able to save some time as we go through these heads, or better use our time as we go through the remaining estimates for 2022. The Hon. Minister and his staff are getting into place. Let us give them a few moments. We would not start the clock going until they are in place.

4.32 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Members. We are starting this agency at 4.32 p.m., which is the time that I have on my computer.

Agency: 74 Region 4: Demerara/Mahaica

Current Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$274,608,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: I would like to start with line item 6111, Administrative. I went through the Budget and recognised that, under this line item, in 2020, more than \$25 million was spent. In 2021, \$22.413 million was spent. Now, in *Budget 2022*, I am only seeing \$21 million. The question is: Could the Hon. Minister say why there was a decrease in the amount?

Mr. Dharamlall]: That question sounds very elegant. The reason there is a decrease is because the Principal Personnel Officer (PPO) resigned, and the Expenditure Planning & Management Analyst (EPMA) was transferred.

Ms. Flue-Bess: I did not hear the Minister's answer clearly.

Mr. Dharamlall: The PPO resigned and the EPMA was transferred.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Does this sum, under line item 6111, cater for the sub-office at Timehri?

Mr. Dharamlall: Could the Hon. Member please repeat?

Ms. Flue-Bess: Does the sum cater for the sub-office at Timehri?

Mr. Chairman: Sub... S.U.B, sub-office.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, which sum and which...

Mr. Chairman: Sub. There is a sub-office in Timehri, does it cater for that?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, this is staffing. This is where we pay staff and the different categories of staff.

Mr. Chairman: Are there any staff in the sub-office?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know if the Hon. Member is referring to the staff there or is it the operations of the sub-office. I do not know what the Hon. Member is asking.

Mr. Chairman: Are any of the staff in this head located at the sub-office?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, are you asking?

Mr. Chairman: That is the question she is asking.

Mr. Dharamlall: The staff at the sub-office are not catered for here.

Ms. Philadelphia: Good afternoon. I recognise, at line item 6116, Contracted Employees, there is an increase of six staff from 2021 to 2022. Would the Hon. Minister be kind enough to state the

category of these personnel, at which offices they would be placed to provide service, and their emoluments?

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Hon. Member. We have a Community Development Officer (CDO), a Typist Clerk, an Accounts Clerk II, a Stores Attendant, a Cleaner, a Handyman and a Checker.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6224 – Print and Non-Print Materials: Could the Hon. Minister say if the media advertisement is catered for under this line item? There is print and non-print at line item 6224. For media advertisement or whatever you are doing, because it is non-print, is it catered for under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: Advertisements would be covered.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Could the Hon. Minister layover those agencies which would be used to carry out the advertisements?

Mr. Chairman: Would you layover the agencies that would be used to execute these advertisements?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, what do you mean? Do you mean the names of the agencies that would do the advertisements, the national newspapers and the television stations? Is that what he wants? Could I ask if you are referring to *New Nation*?

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: I recognise that, when I look at all of the regions from Regions 1 to 10, Regions 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 increased, Region 4 decreased, Region 9 did not move and Region 10 barely increased. My question is: What caused the decrease for Region 4? [**An Hon. Member (Government):** The rigging region.]

Mr. Dharamlall: The rigging region... This Budget was prepared by the regional administration, presented to the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance. I would not be able to account for why the Regional Chairman of Region 4 requested a reduced budget.

Ms. Flue-Bess: I am very surprised at such an answer because if we are here to peruse the budget then there must have been some criteria or something that was used to determine why the amount was decreased. To hear that it is amazing. I want to move on to the next item. Line item 6242 –

Maintenance of Buildings: Does this amount cater for any works to be done on the sub-office at Timehri?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to inform the Hon. Member that the regional budget of Region 4, for the first time, and under this PPP/C Government, has increased by almost \$1 billion. The regional budget of Region 4, which the A Partnership for National Unity/Alliance For Change (APNU/AFC) claims to own, the PPP/C Government increased it by almost \$1 billion. The revised budget... as a matter of fact, the 2021 Budget was \$8.911 billion and the Budget of 2022 is \$9,842,372,000. Over \$1 billion this PPP/C Government, led by His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Irfaan Ali, increased the budget of Region 4. I do not know where this clamour is coming from that the budget of Region 4 was reduced. The budget of Region 4 has increased by over \$1 billion dollars... [Ms. Ferguson: No.] ...or almost \$1 billion. Hon. Member Ms. Ferguson would not understand what \$1 billion GYD is, because Hon. Member Ms. Ferguson mentioned US \$5.2 million Guyana dollars. You would not understand. The Regional Democratic Council (RDC) main office, Enmore sub-office, and Timehri sub-office would all be catered for under this line item.

Ms. Flue-Bess: To the Minister, you sound very dramatic on the stage; but please be reminded that you are being questioned on a specific line item. Now, I heard that the Timehri sub-office is catered for. Could you say what amount of this allotted sum would be spent at Timehri?

Mr. Dharamlall: The people of this Parliament need to know that there was one time when the PPP/C held the position of Vice-Chairman of Region 4, the Timehri sub-office, where the Vice-Chairman is supposed to be, never had an allocation. Absolutely nothing happened when the APNU/AFC was running this Region, previously. They gave nothing to the Vice-Chairman at that time, absolutely nothing. They did not even give a vehicle. That man had to use his personal transportation. Now, they are fighting for every single one of them to get their own vehicle with sirens. I hope the police is listening. We have not given permission for the Regional Chairman or the Vice-Chairman of Region 4, or the Mayor of Georgetown to be 'flying' around Georgetown and the rest of the country with a siren and police lights; they have no permission for it, Minister Benn. The sum of \$600,000 would be placed towards maintenance work at the Timehri sub-office.

Ms. Flue-Bess: My last question for the Hon. Minister is under line item 6281, Security Services. What is the name of the security company or group that is providing the services needed here?

Mr. Dharamlall: There are two companies that provided security services under this programme during the course of 2021. They are Kalibur Security and RK Guyana Security Services.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, Ms. Ferguson...

Mr. Dharamlall: My apologies, RK Guyana Security Services and a part of it earlier last year was Kalibur Security.

Ms. Ferguson: Mr. Chairman, through you to the Hon. Member, I turn the Hon. Member's attention to line item 6294 – Other.

4.47 p.m.

I notice that, for 2021, there was a budgetary allocation of \$3.5 million with a revised \$3.585 million. I notice we have \$200,000. Could the Hon. Member explain the reason for the decrease and say what constitutes 'Other' under this particular line item? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to also mention that it is under this PPP/C Government that the Regional Vice-Chairman of Region 4, for the first time, has security at his house. Yes, the Regional Vice-Chairman of Region 4 has security at his home, under this PPP/C Government. The reason this figure was higher in... [**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** *(Inaudible)*] You have to get a dildo. That is what you are looking for. There were snacks which had to be supplied to the team that distributed the Covid-19 cash grant. That is why the figure was so high last year.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. Hon. Member, Mr....

Mr. Ramsaroop: Cde. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I want to recognise the Opposition Chief Whip first.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Sure.

Opposition Chief Whip [Mr. Jones]: Thank you very much, Cde. Chairman. Just for clarity, the Hon. Minister stated that the budget for Region 4 was submitted under the hands of the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman. I just want to get that confirmation from him.

Mr. Dharamlall: Insofar as I am aware, the regional budget of all the regions would have been submitted by the Regional Democratic Councils.

Mr. Jones: A quick follow-up: I am looking for specificity. The reference is to the Regional Democratic Council, Region 4. Could the Hon. Minister confirm if the submission of the Region 4 budget was done under the hands of the Regional Chairman and the Regional Vice-Chairman?

Mr. Dharamlall: I do not know if Mr. Jones meant that they physically brought the document to me. What I know is that there is a Clerk of the Council who brought the document to the Ministry. That is the duty of the Clerk of the Council. It is to transmit that document to the different agencies of the Government. Insofar as I am aware, all the RDCs' budgets came on behalf of the Regional Democratic Councils representing the 10 administrative regions.

Mr. Jones: A follow-up: Could the Hon. Minister confirm the date of the meeting of Region 4 regional committee at which budget was approved by the Councillors who were elected to serve that region?

Mr. Dharamlall: This budget is still not yet approved. The regional committee or the Regional Democratic Council does not have authority to approve the national budget. What they could do towards the approval of the budget is that they are supposed to consult and prepare the budget for despatch to the Parliament for approval.

Mr. Jones: A follow-up: That is exactly my question. Could you confirm when that consultation was held by the regional Councillors of Region 4?

Mr. Dharamlall: The budget of Region 4 is not the primary function of the Councillors of Region 4 alone. This budget is part of the national Budget of our country. The Ministers of Government, members of the public, community meetings and meetings of regional Councillors in different areas, were the contributors to the compilation of Region 4 budget, and the budget of any other region. What I know for a fact is that the budget circular also gave a timeframe for when the consultations for budget ought to have been, basically, completed and the budget submitted for the

approval process. I am aware too that, during the period of consultations, the Regional Chairman of Region 4, with the other Members of the APNU/AFC were in Brooklyn, New York, I think, making very denigrating statements towards the United States of America (USA) Ambassador in her own country. While they were supposed to be on the ground conducting consultations, they were outside of Guyana doing their own racist politicking. That is what they were doing.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Sir, I just need some further clarification for line item 6211. In 2021, there was a budgeted allocation for \$21,344,000. In 2022, the allocation is \$18,230,000, a reduction of \$3,114,000 which reflects a 15% reduction. I just need some further clarification here, Sir. Could the Hon. Minister clarify for me why this reduction?

Mr. Dharamlall: I have a breakdown of what composes *Budget 2022*. I could relay to you. It includes stipend for the regional Councillors; for the Toshaos and the Deputy Toshaos of, I think, St. Cuthbert's Mission (Pakuri); travelling and subsistence of Councillors; the hosting of RDC statutory and special meetings; the Regional Administrative Committee (RAC) meetings; committee meetings of the RDC and, of course, refreshments and meals for the offices of the Regional Chairman and Regional Vice-Chairman and support to social need cases.

What we have been also doing successfully now is that, rather than this be used as slush fund by the Regional Chairman, for some of those social assistance cases, there is a Ministry of Human Services and Social Security to which those cases are referred. Likewise, if they are health-related, the Ministry of Health, and if they are educational related or agriculture related, whatever the requirements, the sector Ministries have adequate resources to deal with them directly. It is also for national observances for youth and sport activities, Amerindian heritage, religious observances, arts and culture, community assistance in some cases, and the operations of both offices and servicing of their vehicles – the Regional Chairman PVV 2895 and the Vice-Chairman PVV 6389. These are PVV series vehicles which were brought under the PPP/C for them. This sum also caters for payments of utility bills, for fuel and support to single parents. There are still elements of social support provided, but a lot of it has now gone to the Ministry that is responsible.

Mr. Mahipaul: A follow-up on the questions that were asked by the Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, with reference to the budget submission and in keeping with the budget circular that specified the process that one must follow for its composition and submission of the proposal to the Ministry of

Finance. With reference to what the Hon. Minister indicated, I am saying to the Hon. Minister and asking him to verify this: The Regional Chairman of Region 4, in the name of Daniel Seeram, whom he referenced, wrote a letter to him indicating that he will be departing the country on 13th August, 2021 and will be returning on 20th...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, the line item, please?

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, line item 6211, with reference to the RDC allocation. The budget circular was issued on 30th July, 2021. The Regional Chairman came back into this country on 28th August, 2021 and wrote a letter to the Clerk of Council requesting that a meeting be held for budget consultation. That that end, the Clerk of Council wrote back to the Chairman on 4th September, 2021, indicating that the budget was already prepared and will be submitted. It was sent to the Chairman, line item 6211, for him to vet. No meeting of the RDC was called in the month of August to deal with budget consultation, even though the Regional Chairman was writing letters upon letters, back and forth, to the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Senior Minister in the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance, the Finance Secretary (FS) and the Permanent Secretary requesting that budget consultations be held in keeping with the budget circular. None of that was done and we talk about 'One Guyana'.

Sir, I am asking the Hon. Minister to confirm whether what I am saying is accurate or not. I wish to say to you, Sir, as promised in my budget speech, that there are copies of the letter, there is the delivery note to show that these letters were despatched, there was a meeting with the Director of Budget where these very comments were ventilated requesting consultation for the people of Region 4. It did not happen. I am saying that I am asking for clarification ...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member...

Mr. Mahipaul: Sir, I am not finished with the question.

Mr. Chairman: I am finished listening. I am putting the question because the issue here is consultation on the budget preparation.

Mr. Mahipaul: And that there was a request for consultation.

Mr. Chairman: I am putting that to the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Mahipaul: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: I am not going to tolerate further *to and fro* over the process of budget consultation and preparation. I am going to return to the Estimates before us. Hon. Minister, could you detail the process of budget consultation if you want to, or do you want us to move on?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, just for the record, budget consultation is not the only duty of the Regional Democratic Council. During the budget consultation process, in this specific case as they are complaining, the Regional Chairman is not the only person who has authority on the consultation of Region 4 budget. We have... [**Hon. Members (Opposition):** *[Inaudible]*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, a question was asked, a speech was made and the Hon. Minister has his turn to present. When the Hon. Member was making his presentation, no one interrupted him by shouting. Hon. Minister, please continue.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The consultation has always been ongoing for this Government. Every day of any given year, we work. Right now, as part of this whole exercise, people are still calling and consulting. I want to make very clear that this is not the budget of the Regional Chairman of Region 4. This increase of nearly \$1 billion came from consultation with the people of Region 4. That is why we said this is a people-centred budget; this is a people-driven budget. For all the clamour and the noise that is coming from the Opposition, for the first time in the history of this country, Region 4 budget is over \$9.8 billion, which is nearly \$1 billion more than last year which was even greater than what the APNU/AFC had given to Region 4. I do not know what the clamour in the Opposition is. Why are they clamouring? I want to make it very clear to the people of Region 4 that they have more money in this year's Budget, much more money than APNU/AFC ever gave to you. What the APNU/AFC wants to do and is trying to do is to derail this process. The Regional Chairman of Region 4 went to the Ministry of Finance for a budget meeting and refused to make a contribution. You do not know that because ... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** He requested consultation.] You do not know that. [**Mr. Mahipaul:** I was there.]

Mr. Jones: Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, Mr. Jones...

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, I have the floor.

5.02 p.m.

Mr. Jones: The Regional Chairman of Region 4 is not here to defend himself to the statement the Minister just made.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I am going to allow the Hon. Minister because I cannot see the Hon. Minister not representing the fact. You may proceed, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The fact remains that the Regional Chairman went to the Ministry of Finance and refused to make a contribution to that meeting which was part of the budget consultation process. Also, there was a period, during the course of last year, when the Regional Chairman himself called special meetings of the Regional Democratic Council (RDC) and his own Councillors refused to turn up.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I cannot deal with that, but I can deal with your confirmation that the Regional Chairman went to a budget meeting at the Ministry of Finance. You may move on to the comments made by the last presenter.

Mr. Dharamlall: These were issues that were supposed to be raised at those special meetings. Actually, Mr. Chairman, the Hon. Mr. Christopher Jones and others turned up at the RDC when the Alliance For Change (AFC) Councillors wanted to move a vote of no confidence against the Regional Chairman of Region 4. In that same meeting, too, they could have discussed the budget. They are the ones responsible for their own Chairman not being able to be part of the process.

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$274,608,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$22,000,000

Programme: 741 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$22,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$381,843,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister identify some of the areas under this head which will benefit?

Mr. Dharamlall: Under this line item, we will do manual weeding and cleaning, some mechanical excavation, maintenance of dams and other infrastructure. We will be doing these types of work in all the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) areas.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6281 – Security Services: I recall earlier the Minister had given two names of the security services being used. I got the first one, I think it is RK's Guyana Security Services. I do not know what the second one is. I would like to know if the same security services will be used here.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, there are two security providers. For this year, it would be one but, for last year, there were two security providers. Would you like the name? Could I go ahead and give the name of the security firm?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, you may.

Mr. Dharamlall: It is RK's Guyana Security Services.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): What training will be done under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is a total of \$150,000. A lot of the training will be on fire prevention, fire safety and on occupation safety and health (OSH). [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] Occupational safety and health – OSH.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6284 – Other: Under this line item, there is a total of \$16,487,000 budgeted here. Could the Hon. Minister state how these sums will be expended?

Mr. Dharamlall: This caters for the payment of Sluice Attendants and grill workers. Nineteen Sluice Attendants and ten grill workers.

Mr. Ramsaroop: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: There is a budgetary allocation for \$4,550,000 which is pretty high compared to the previous year. Could the Hon. Minister state why such a high increase for the 2022 Budget?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, the fuel and lubricants will cater for the pump at Triumph, Huntley, Cane Grove; Golden Grove, Victoria, the Joyce Phillips pump at Cane Grove, the sub-office at Cane Grove and fuel for the sub-office at Timehri.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$381,843,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$30,000,000

Ms. Flue-Bess: Project code 1701200 – Agricultural Development: I see there is a description: “Construction of bridges and culvert.” This is at Soesdyke and Industry. My question to the Hon. Minister is: Where in Soesdyke will the revetments be constructed?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we have the rehabilitation of a drainage culvert at Unity, Mahaica; the construction of a timber revetment at Meertins sluice, Soesdyke; the construction of a timber revetment at the main canal at Industry; and a timber revetment at south Company Road, Buxton.

Programme: 742 – Agriculture – \$30,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$229,847,000

Mr. Jones: Mr. Chairman, my apologies, did we go to capital works for Programme: 742 – Agriculture? [**An Hon. Member:** Yes.]

Mr. Chairman: We also passed it.

Ms. Philadelphia: Line item 6231 – Fuel and Lubricants: I recognise under this line item we have a total sum of \$3,900,000. I understand and recognise that, in the period, we will have flooding, *et cetera*. Could the Hon. Minister be kind enough to say, under fuel and lubricants, what are we talking about, and will the kokers and sluices be having this or, for the agencies would it be going to the bond and how it will be utilised?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, for the edification of the Hon. Member, who was also an NDC Chairperson at Haslington/Grove NDC, which is the NDC where I spent five years of my life... I would like to let you know that I do not think we use fuel and lubricants... Maybe we use lubricants, but not fuel on kokers. I just outlined where the fuel was going to go under the agriculture programme. In this case, we have a few vehicles that will use the fuel, and a generator. There are three vehicles and a generator. You are also only speaking about a \$20,000 increase from last year. That is the increase that the Hon. Member is speaking about – a \$20,000 increase.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Thank you, Hon. Minister, for your lengthy, dramatic display. Line item 6251 – Maintenance of Roads: I see there is a steep increase to \$120 million. I would like to know which roads will be maintained with this allotted sum.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, between 2020 and 2021, we did 182 roads in Region 4. This year, under the maintenance programme of the region, with the caveat that we are also working with the Ministry of Public Works which will be doing many more roads than what we are doing at the level of the RDC, we will be doing roads in Cane Grove, Enmore, Belmont, Better Hope, Beterverwagting (BV), Herstelling, Beterverwagting again, Coldingen, Lusignan, Annandale, Enterprise, Bare Root, Grove, Soesdyke and Ogle. We also have a force account in the regional administration that we would be doing additional fixing.

5.17 p.m.

Those roads are done through the... [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] Mr. Chairman, I was asked off the record about Georgetown. The Hon. Member, Ms. Ferguson, as a former junior Minister of Public Infrastructure without a Cabinet membership – the junior Ministers did not have Cabinet membership under the last Administration – would not know about these things. The RDC does not cover infrastructure works in the city of Georgetown, and that is a historic fact across all governments. I shudder to think that a former Minister of Government, in this case a junior Minister without Cabinet membership, who worked in public works, does not know that. It is very terrible. The Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development will be doing Georgetown-related construction.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$229,847,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$175,000,000

Mr. Jones: Project code 1100500 – Bridges: “Construction of bridges and culverts.” Could the Hon. Minister indicate if Mocha, Kuru Kuru, Victoria, Hope, Friendship, Diamond and Golden Grove will be part of the culverts and bridges to be constructed?

Mr. Dharamlall: There is also Enmore, Lusignan and Annadale – those other areas – but you seem to miss those areas, Hon. Member Mr. Christopher Jones. There is also Cove and John and Nooten Zuil. This capital programme this year is focused on bridges that are much worse, or are in a much worse condition, than bridges in some other areas... [**An Hon. Member:** Culverts.] ...and culverts. If the Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, could point me to a bridge or culvert in Victoria or a bridge and culvert in Mocha... The Hon. Member, Mr. Jones, had an entire year to bring those issues to the attention of the Government as part of this national consultation on *Budget 2022*. I have not seen any representation of any Hon. Member of the APNU/AFC in any form whatsoever, in Region 4, that these are the areas and activities that they would like to pursue; not a single one.

What I could report to this National Assembly is that we would be building a bridge in Cane Grove; one in Goedverwagting; one in Haslington; one in Enmore; and one in Helena, Mahaica. We would be doing a road in Cane Grove; the slaughterhouse dam in Mahaica; Nooten Zuil... Actually, I visited Nooten Zuil, and people have... I want to recognise Ms. Ava Benjamin who has been pushing me to get that road done in Nooten Zuil. So, we are going to do the Nooten Zuil road. Unfortunately, for five years, do you know where they did roads, Mr. Chairman? None in Nooten Zuil, none in Cove and John and none in Hope, Lowlands. There is absolutely no road and street done in Hope. Do you know why? It is because the PPP/C supporters live there. That is what those same APNU/AFC people did for five years – absolutely nothing.

We are going to be doing a road in Prospect as well; Playfield Street in Mon Repos; Eight Street in Martyrs Ville; Cemetery Road in Mocha – I will repeat, again, Hon. Member Ms. Flue-Bess, Cemetery Road in Mocha. This is going to be the fourth one we are doing in Mocha in 18 months – and upgrading of a road in New Hope, that is the New Hope Housing Scheme. These are roads under the capital programme. We have a plethora of roads as well under the current programme. We have an even larger number of roads in the Ministry of Public Works. There will be more roads

done. As a matter of fact, across the regions, we will be doing close to 500 roads this year. Last year we did over 300 roads. This year we are going to be doing over 500 kilometres of roads in the Region. These are community roads, not public roads.

Mr. Jones: Cde. Chairman, we thank the Hon. Minister. Just a quick follow-up. For the record, I did not name Enmore, Haslington, Mahaica, Cane Grove and Goedverwagting because they are listed here. The villages that I named are the villages that are in need of culverts and bridges as well. This information has been provided by the Councillors of the respective areas. It comes back to the point we were making, had the Councillors of the Regional Democratic Council for Region 4 been consulted, this information would have been shared.

Ms. Philadelphia: I am happy that the Hon. Minister mentioned Nooten Zuil. I want to ask the Hon. Minister, the road in Nooten Zuil of which he speaks is it the Nooten Zuil main road? He visited Nooten Zuil. The Hon. Member was happy to say that he visited Nooten Zuil.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, I already put the question to the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, when you leave Georgetown going east, when you are about to leave Belfield... I actually had the opportunity of going to Mr. Burnham's house when he was in the house. I do not know if anyone of you had that opportunity, but I did. I visited the Arapaima ponds at the back too. I do not know what the few of you are speaking about Mr. Burnham. You do not know anything about him; absolutely nothing you know about him – none of you – and you behave as though you are Mr. Burnham's children. No; you have no knowledge of who Mr. Burnham was. I was in his house.

Mr. Chairman: I am happy to know that Hon. Minister. Could you answer the question?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, going east across that bridge that links Nooten Zuil and Belfield, you turn right immediately across the bridge, that road is the main road of Nooten Zuil, and that road is where I had the meeting. Unfortunately, the former Chairman of the Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC)... The people told me that they have been trying all the time. To be honest with you, that is what they told me. The current NDC Chairman was there. I invited the Overseer as well. The people there told me that the reason they feel their road was never done, despite so much productivity coming out of Nooten Zuil – rice farmers, cash crop farmers and

other types of farmers... Do you know why? They told me that they believe their road was never done because they look like me. That is a travesty to do because you discriminated against the people of Nooten Zuil; you racially discriminated against the people of Nooten Zuil; you politically discriminated against the people; you victimised them because they voted for the PPP/C, but we are going to do the road in Nooten Zuil.

Ms. Philadelphia: Mr. Chair, I beg to differ, the Nooten Zuil main road received maintenance and rehabilitation works from the APNU/AFC twice within the five years period. I am happy to know that you could speak so eloquently about Nooten Zuil, but you abandoned Section 20, Haslington. You have abandoned Section 18, Enmore, where there is the ‘Mediterranean Sea and the Pacific Ocean.’ You should talk about those areas too.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, are you going to ask a question on if those roads at Enmore and Haslington are going to be addressed?

Ms. Philadelphia: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Ms. Flue-Bess, you have the floor.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Thank you Cde. Chairman. I am happy to hear the Hon. Minister speak so... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Eloquently.] ...eloquently about Mr. Burnham and that you liked Mr. Burnham so much that you shouted to the top of your lungs for the last two years that you have completed the Burnham Boulevard in the Mocha Arcadia community. My question to you is on project code 1400700, Roads: “Provision for roads.” I see there is the rehabilitation of roads at Mocha and Mon Repos. Could the Hon. Minister say if the roads to be done in Mocha will finally be Burnham Boulevard – because you claimed it was done – and Barnwell North main road?

Mr. Dharamlall: The APNU/AFC, it is something that you should learn from the PPP/C. It is about your loyalty to your leadership.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, could you answer the question about the roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am asking the question, Mr. Chairman. You are supposed to be the people who are carrying Mr. Burnham’s legacy and you are refusing to do so.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we have had many speeches in this particular consideration. I am now asking you to answer the question with respect to the roads Hon. Member Ms. Flue-Bess asked.

Mr. Dharamlall: We are going to build an asphaltic concrete road at Cemetery road in Mocha this year. The local democratic organ... [**An Hon. Member:** Which one?] The Mocha NDC. Resources were placed in Mocha NDC, and they indicated to me, as the Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, that as part of the maintenance programme of the Mocha/Arcadia NDC that that same Burnham Boulevard was one of the roads that they were going to do. Do you know who controls the Mocha NDC, Mr. Chairman? It is totally APNU/AFC Councillors. Do you know who also lives there, Mr. Chairman? The Hon. Member, Ms. Flue-Bess. I visited Mocha a few times since I became Minister...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you are saying that the other road, the NDC Councillors, who are APNU/AFC told you that they are going to look after that road. Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: I also wish to posit that we have done extensive drainage and cleaning work in the Mocha NDC since August, 2020 and since 2021. Currently, we are also, at this moment, cleaning in Mocha.

Mr. Chairman: Is that under this particular head?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is under the national treasury.

Ms. Flue-Bess: The Hon. Minister, should be sent to jail for lying in the House.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, you have to withdraw that.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Sorry, I withdraw that. ...being untruthful because...

Mr. Chairman: Again, you have to withdraw that, Hon. Member.

Ms. Flue-Bess: I am going to project code... [**An Hon. Member:** *Inaudible*] Because the Hon. Member said the road was done.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have another question with respect to the roads being done under this head, Hon. Member?

Ms. Flue-Bess: Yes, I am on the same head.

Mr. Chairman: Please, let us get to the question.

Ms. Flue-Bess: Based on the response I got from the Hon. Minister, he is saying that Burnham Boulevard will or was done by the NDC twice.

5.32 p.m.

Do not worry, you will be fed the right information shortly. I rest my case there.

Ms. Philadelphia: I recognise here, under Roads, that we have about six to seven roads, and I do remember Nabaclis is the forgotten village. I trust that, like we have established before, because of lack of consultation with the elected officials, nothing at all was placed in the budget for Nabaclis. Dilapidated roads...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, please, the question has to be, is Nabaclis included?

Ms. Philadelphia: Will Nabaclis be considered for roads and bridges in this budget. I recognise that no mention was made here...

Mr. Chairman: We are dealing with this head. The Minister has consistently said that there are many other roads to be done throughout the country under public works. Hon. Member, please do not lecture me. You are saying that Nabaclis is not included. I am asking you if you could ask the Minister the question, if there are any savings that Nabaclis could be considered.

Ms. Philadelphia: Yes. Thank you very much.

Mr. Dharamlall: There is an allocation of \$137 million to do some roads in Region 4. Region 4 is from Moblissa all the way to Cane Grove. The APNU/AFC Members of Parliament are only specific about certain villages.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please. If there are savings, are you going to be considering Nabaclis?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, all roads are going to be considered. I just want to make it very clear, the last Government, what have they done in Nabaclis?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we have exhausted the time and gone over by two minutes for this head.

Programme: 743 – Public Works – \$175,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$358,050,000

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$358,050,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$196,000,000

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$196,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$6,370,116,000

Programme: 744 – Education Delivery – \$6,370,116,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,804,908,000

Programme: 745 – Health Services – \$1,804,908,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Members. I thank the Minister and the staff of Region 4 for taking us through that head. Please let us now consider the Estimates for Agency 75, Region 5, Mahaica/Berbice. I will ask the Hon. Minister to get his staff in place.

Hon. Members: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I have been in this House a long time and I have not heard such personal comments being made by Members to Members.

Agency: 75 Region 5: Mahaica/Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$250,611,000

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6116 – Contracted Employees: I recognise in 2021 there was one and now in 2022 we have five. Also, I recognise the significant increase in the budgeted sum here from \$2 million to \$8 million. Could the Hon. Minister state what are the designations and emoluments of the five contracted employees?

Mr. Dharamlall: An Expenditure Planning and Management Analyst (EPMA), Supply Expeditor, Stores attendant, two Typist Clerks. The EPMA is \$179,412 and the others are \$74,900.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6211 – Expenses Specific to the Agency: Could the Hon. Minister say or give a breakdown of this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: The RDC statutory meetings – Regional Intelligence Committee (RIC), tourism committee and the different committees of the RDC. There are quite a number of committees of the RDC.

Finally, this RDC is allowed to function – quite unlike when it was being bullied by the elements of the last Government – with stipends for Councillors, disaster preparedness, telephone and electricity for the Chairman and Vice Chairman; stipend to the Toshao and vice Toshao or deputy Toshao of Moraikobai; and other incidentals associated with the conduct of the chair and vice chair offices.

Mr. Jordan: Could the Hon. Minister state whether there would be any social and health services offered under this line? Of course, I know the Regional Chairman would want to be generous throughout the year. I just want to know, what are those services?

Mr. Dharamlall: As I said earlier, in Region 4 and in other regions, we are upgrading the equality of services that we have across agencies of the Government. Those that are beyond the capacity of

Expenses Specific to Agency, line item 6211, those issues are going to be forwarded to the Ministry of Human Services and Social Security.

Mr. Jordan: Could the Hon. Minister state whether the Regional Chairman and Vice Chairman received the 7% increase that was given last year, and whether it was budgeted or catered for in the 2022 Budget?

Mr. Dharamlall: Unfortunately, for Mr. Jordan, the Hon. Member, this line item does not cater for the stipend or the salaries for regional chairs and vice chairs.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6248 – Other: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of that line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: This figure of \$3.5 million is for... [**Mr. Mahipaul:** Do not worry, you will be my PS.] You should worry about whether APNU/AFC would keep you there. ...the tender board members, evaluators and other services including bank charges and advertising.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6311 – Rates and Taxes: Could the Hon. Minister please state whether rates and taxes were paid to the local authorities last year and how much per building, specifically, is catered for in 2022?

Mr. Dharamlall: The answer to the first part of the question, yes. Some living quarters of the RDC, the main office, the board room, some suboffices and the Amerindian hostile, those are some of the buildings that are covered under this line item.

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6312 – Subventions to Local Authorities: Could the Hon. Minister kindly state which local authority will receive the \$10 million subvention?

Mr. Dharamlall: As is traditional under the PPP/C Government, we have always supported the Amerindian villages quite massively. It will continue this year. We are providing fuel to Moraikobai Amerindian Village. A lot of this grant will go towards the electricity system and other developmental works within the Moraikobai Amerindian Village.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$250,611,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$11,000,000

Mr. Jordan: Could the Hon. Minister kindly lay over the list of furniture and equipment that are slated to be purchased under this project code 2503900? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: I have the list here; I could read it out.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Jordan is asking for you to lay it over.

Mr. Dharamlall: Alright.

Programme: 751 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$11,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

5.47 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$230,593,000

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, and I will try to merge line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges, with that: Could the Hon. Minister kindly layover the works that are expected to be completed under these two line items?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, can you kindly layover those?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, thank you. In addition to laying over, I would like to state that we would be doing bridges at Good Faith, Champagne, Blairmont, and New Providence. We will be doing some roads in Zee Zight, Number 7 Village, Esau and Jacob, and Champagne. By the way, at Number 7 Village – the village that I come from – in the last Administration there was an APNU/AFC NDC and it absolutely did not do a single road. It did nothing.

Mr. Chairman: You are going good so far Hon. Minister, please.

Mr. Dharamlall: Esau and Jacob, Champagne, Burma, Huntley/Mahaicony, Dundee, Hyde Park/Mahaicony, Novar and Cotton Tree are under the maintenance programme. [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Jordan: Line item 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works: Could the Hon. Minister give us a breakdown of the works that are scheduled to be completed under this line item?

Mr. Dharamlall: We will be doing work in all the NDCs – Blairmont/Gelderland, Rosignol/Zeelust, Bel Air/Woodlands, Bath/Woodley Park, Union/Naarstigheid, Seafield/Tempie, Profit/Rising Sun, Mahaicony/Abary, Hamlet/Chance and Woodlands/Farm. Some of the villages in Profit/Rising Sun are: Eldorado, Foulis, Seafield, Lichfield, Belle Vue, Jacoba, Brahan, Ross, Britannia, Union, Number 29 Village and Lovely Lass. [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] He and my sister lived in the same village.

Mr. Chairman: Was it in Lovely Lass?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: That is great. It is a lovely place.

Mr. Dharamlall: He was never that kind of person. Unfortunately, my sister died trying to make *[inaudible]*.

Mr. Chairman: We could take that; *all of we does* live in the same place.

Mr. Dharamlall: So, please do not make a mockery of her.

There is Bush Lot, Armadale, Bel Air, Hopetown, Underneeming, Naarstigheid, Bath, Number 12 Village, Number 11 Village, Waterloo, Numbers 8, 7, 6, and 2 Villages, Zee Zight, Cotton Tree, Rosignol, D'Edward, Zorg en Hoop, Ithaca; coming this way, Huntley, Dundee, Airy Hall, Novar, Recess, Good Faith and Calcutta – again, I recall the Hon. Member mentioning that we are not doing stuff – Chester, De Hoop and other areas in Mahaicony and Mahaica.

Mr. Jordan: Thank you very much for that list, Hon. Minister. Could you say to this honourable Committee what is the estimated sum that you would spend in the Union/Naarstigheid NDC, the Bath/Woodley Park NDC and the Profit/Rising Sun NDC, thank you?

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, in Union/Naarstigheid we will be spending, I think, the most, \$19,980,000. I know the Hon. Member used to be a Councillor. I hope he is not a Councillor and a serving Member of Parliament. That would be a travesty for him. He always sits there, and they

do nothing for Bush Lot, but everything is done in the People's National Congress/Reform (PNC/R) villages. Again, there was nothing for Bush Lot. Do you know why? It is because Bush Lot has Indo-Guyanese and people who support the PPP/C.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you are going very good. Tell us what you are doing for everybody. You are doing good.

Mr. Dharamlall: [An Hon. Member: *[Inaudible]*] Mr. Chairman, I had the indignity of being in Bath Settlement where my mother is from. That same young lady, the Hon. Natasha Singh-Lewis... I am sorry, it is the relatively elderly looking, Natasha Singh-Lewis.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, we are getting a bit personal now. Please, let us continue with...

Mr. Dharamlall: I am saying, young and...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, let us continue with you providing the information on the roads in the two NDCs.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, a relative of the Hon. Natasha Singh-Lewis is one of our Councillors.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please, let us keep our relatives out of Parliament.

Mr. Dharamlall: It hurts that they removed every streetlight in Bath Settlement when they were in Government. It hurts.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, please, could we talk about the roads?

Mr. Dharamlall: They went to Cotton Tree and did the same. They went to Blairmont and did the same. They went to Bush Lot and did the same.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, if you are finished, I will ask the Hon. Member to ask another question.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, we are also in Bath Settlement. We will be spending \$7.731 million. In Profit/Rising Sun, we will be spending \$12,885,000. Mr. Chairman, I just want to

reiterate that Profit/Rising Run and Union/Naarstigheid are two NDCs controlled by the APNU/AFC. They are getting much more than what the PPP/C's NDCs are getting.

Mr. Jordan: Mr. Chairman, I would not want to consume the time. Could the Hon. Minister state clearly for me the amount for the Bath/Woodley Park NDC and Profit/Rising Sun. I did not get that clearly.

Mr. Dharamlall: The NDC of Union/Naarstigheid controlled by the APNU/AFC is getting \$19,980,340. There is an estimated 23.26 kilometres. Bath/Woodley Park has 9 kilometres which are estimated at \$7,731,000. This is a PPP/C's NDC – all PPP/C. There is Profit/Rising Sun controlled by the APNU/AFC with 15 kilometres for \$12,885,000.

Mr. Jordan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I trust...

Mr. Duncan: Mr. Dharamlall is just nasty, that is what you are. You are a nasty fellow.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Duncan: He is nasty [*inaudible*] is sitting here.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Duncan: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Duncan.

Mr. Duncan: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Duncan, could you please take your seat? Hon. Member Mr. Duncan...

Mr. Duncan: I will not take my seat.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member Mr. Duncan, I ask that you withdraw...

Mr. Duncan: I will not withdraw.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Member, withdraw from the House at this moment.

Mr. Duncan: *[Inaudible]*

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister Ms. Teixeira, could I get you to move the motion under the relevant Standing Order that this Member be withdrawn from the House for the next four sittings.

Mr. Duncan: You are a nasty fellow; that is what you are. You are disrespectful to the House. The Speaker is condoning you all the time, Dharamlall. *[Inaudible]* All the parliamentary staff *[inaudible]* and all the staff from the ministries are listening to you. *[Inaudible]*

Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Governance and Government Chief Whip [Ms. Teixeira]: Mr. Chairman, based on the behaviour of the Member and his disrespect to you as the Speaker of this House, I move that the Hon. Member, who is not speaking from his seat – he is not in his chair – be suspended from the House for the next four sittings.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, the Member is now suspended. Hon. Members, I put the motion that the Hon. Member Mr. Duncan be suspended from the House for the next four sittings.

Motion put and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I will take a short suspension. I will ask the Hon. Member Mr. Jones and Minister Ms. Teixeira to meet in the chamber.

Sitting suspended at 5.56 p.m.

Sitting resumed at 8.22 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the House will resolve itself into the Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, when we broke we were at pages 516 and 517, Agency 75, Programme 752, Agriculture. I want to invite the Hon. Minister, Mr. Nigel Dharamlall, and his team, to continue the consideration of the Estimates for the regions. Hon. Members, when we broke, it was 5.55 p.m., and we had spent 20 minutes considering this head. We had an hour allocated so we have 40 minutes remaining for the consideration of Region 5. Members, we will

continue with Programme 752, Agency 75, Region 5, Mahaica/Berbice. I propose the question again that the sum stated for this programme stands part of the Estimates. Hon. Members, just let me check to ensure that we do not have any hands raised online. There are no hands raised.

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$230,593,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$81,000,000

Programme: 752 – Agriculture – \$81,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, I will have to continue to put each head because we do have persons online who may have questions to raise. Hon. Members, turn to pages 518 and 519.

8.27 p.m.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$201,437,000

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$201,437,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Could I take one minute? Hon. Minister Dharamlall, could I see you for one moment, please?

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$131,500,000

Programme: 753 – Public Works – \$131,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$2,471,956,000

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$2,471,956,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$156,000,000

Programme: 754 – Education Delivery – \$156,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$1,104,865,000

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$1,104,865,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$219,500,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 1203700 – Buildings-Health: Could the Hon. Minister say whether this description here that states provision for bond is for the bond to store additional medical drugs and medical supplies? Where would this bond be located, Minister?

Mr. Dharamlall: This is for the construction of a pharmacy bond. This is one of the upgraded policies of the Ministry of Health, it is to ensure that we have better services in our regions. In Region 5, we have had many challenges regarding proper storage of drugs and medical supplies; at Bush Lot, West Coast Berbice, we are going to be constructing a regional health storage bond.

Programme: 755 – Health Services – \$219,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: On my own behalf, I take this opportunity to thank the Hon. Minister and his staff of Region 5 for taking us through those Estimates. Let the House resume.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Hon. Member, Mr. Nigel Dharamlall would like to make a statement.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good evening to everyone. Earlier today, this House had some issues which we believe became very heated. I would like to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that if I had said anything that was misconstrued, it was not my intention to make those statements to that effect and if there were statements which were also unparliamentary, on my part, during the course of the interrogations, then I would like to withdraw them as well. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the House will resolve itself into Committee of Supply.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let me invite the Hon. Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, the Hon. Member, Mr. Nigel Dharamlall, and his team from Region 6 to take us through the next agency, Agency 76. We have the Hon. Deputy Speaker with us online. Like the Hon. Members, Ms. Veerasammy and Dr. Singh, I think the Hon. Deputy Speaker is also sharing the same birthday. Congratulations to your daughter, Deputy.

Agency: 76 Region 6: East Berbice/Corentyne

Current Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$222,426,000

Mr. Seeraj: Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: I would like to direct the Minister's attention here, there has been an increase in the maintenance of the building. Sir, my question is: are these state-owned buildings or are these rentals? Why is there an increase?

Mr. Dharamlall: These are all public buildings. This is a very distinct approach from the last Government, APNU/AFC that converted private property. I have to be careful with the terms I use now. This is a distinct policy from the last Government, they had actually spent quite a lot of taxpayers' moneys to also repair private property. In this case, in Region 6, there are some concrete and concrete and timber buildings that are going to be maintained. Works would be done on these

areas: the Regional Vice-Chair, electrical department, legal aide and National Data Management Authority (NDMA), and also the Accounts Department.

8.42 p.m.

There are some things that are quite important for all of us to understand that the first peoples of Guyana, and I want to reiterate what the Vice-President said in the press recently, are paramount to the transformation of our country. The services that the PPP/C Government, gives to our Amerindian people, to our first peoples, would be services and opportunities that are no different than anyone else in our country. One of the sore issues affecting our Amerindian people has to do with the way they are treated when they come on the Coast, especially. We believe in them getting the best of the services, that even accommodation – something that is supposed to be as basic as accommodation – they must have also the best accommodation.

We are going to be doing some massive maintenance work on the Amerindian hostel in Stanleytown, New Amsterdam. Quite a lot of students come from the Berbice River, Amerindian students, have no place to stay and that is where they stay. Likewise, when other villages come from Orealla/Siparuta, and even other parts of the country but end up in Region 6 and New Amsterdam, in particular, they must also have a place of comfort. This PPP/C Government is very happy to make sure our Amerindian people are comforted.

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$222,426,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$34,000,000

Programme: 761 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$34,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$ 1,260,014,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6253, Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works, with the sum of \$620 million. Could the Minister please give us a breakdown?

Mr. Dharamlall: We are going to be doing substantial drainage and irrigation (D&I) work in Region 6. There are actually 89 canals that we are going to be doing drainage and irrigation work on in all of the agricultural areas. I could probably give you some examples: in New Forest – this is in the Canje area – in Black Bush Polder. We are also actually going to do work on the Torani Canal, Kaboyari Creek, Number 36, Number 41, Number 51, Alness, Auchlyne, Ulverston—I have a very good friend in Ulverston, Ms. Smith—Manchester, Bengal, the different four polders of Black Bush Polder, Number 48, Number 47, Brighton, Maida, Phillipi, Kildonan, Hogstye, Liverpool, Kilmarnock, Bloomfield, Tarlogie, Whim, Bush Lot, Rosehall and Crabwood Creek as well. Region 6 is predominantly farming, agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture, as well, has been spending a lot of time with the farmers, as are other Members of the Government, making sure that all of the infrastructure are well maintained and will redound to the benefit of the farmers. I am happy to report that we are going to be spending all of these moneys in the best interest of the farmers of Region 6.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$ 1,260,014,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$74,000,000

Dr. Mahadeo: To the Hon. Minister again, under project code 1301000, Drainage and Irrigation Works, there is another \$71 million.

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, substantial drainage and irrigation works have to be done in Region 6. This is also complementing the work the Ministry of Agriculture is doing. There is massive rehabilitation work in the drainage and irrigation sector in Region 6. For example, a heavy-duty bridge at Number 61 and Number –62 facade canal is going to be constructed, a 15x58 ft bridge, the Crabwood Creek Number 1 sluice is going to be rehabilitated, the Number 49 sluice will be reconstructed at Number 49 village, the Number 66 sluice will be rehabilitated and the Number 52

(Macunda) Canal's drainage structure will also be reconstructed. We will also be rehabilitating a heavy-duty bridge at the Number 52 facade and well as the Number 56 facade. In addition, the 15 Neighbourhood Democratic Council (NDC) districts within Region 6 will also be provided with high-density polyethylene (HDPE) tubes and other pieces of drainage equipment to facilitate the water management systems of Region 6. I believe this will be moneys well spent for thousands of farmers in Region 6.

Dr. Mahadeo: I would like to thank the Minister for ensuring that all the NDCs will have some moneys there, including my own village, Number 66 village.

Programme: 762 – Agriculture – \$74,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$509,135,000

Dr. Mahadeo: I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, \$39.9 million. Minister, could you please expound?

Mr. Dharamlall: Indeed, as part of the upgrade of services that are providing in Region 6, we will be rehabilitating the regional engineer quarters and providing accommodation for some other members of staff; we will be doing some living quarters. Also, in health, we will be rehabilitating the living quarters for some of the health officers. The hospital Chief Executive Officer's (CEO) living quarters will also be rehabilitated. The medical superintendent and a plethora of other quarters for medical officers will be rehabilitated.

As part of the programme budgeting of Region 6, under line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads, we have also budgeted to maintain 23 different roads in addition to all the roads that we have done previously in Region 6. This will also complement what will be done in the Capital Works capital programme, and with the Ministry of Public Works. The Ministry of Public Works has already budgeted to do roads in every single NDC.

If you permit me, Mr. Chairman, in the Crabwood Creek NDC area, we will be doing two main accesses. In Number 52 to Number 74, we will be doing the Number 74 Middle Walk and the

Number 72, First Street. In Port Mourant to John NDC, Area R, Last Street, Ankerville, and the continuation of Area R, First Street, which was done later last year. At Rosehall, which is one of the towns in Region 6, First Street, Swamp section, Independence Avenue to West Side-line, East side-line dam or the pump road, as it is more commonly called and Third Street, East to West side-line will also be done.

At the Good Hope to Number 51 NDC, we will be doing the 49 Cemetery Street, eastern side and the western side, as well as 46, First Street, eastern side. At the Fort Ordinance NDC, we will be doing the Better Hope Street and Sawmill Dam. In Blackbush, we will be doing First Street, Lesbeholden North, and First Street, Field 7, Mibicuri South. In the Hogsty to Lancaster NDC, McGowan Primary School Street. I actually went to that area during the cash grant that the Hon. Minister of Education had and that street was actually in a very bad state. In Alness, Section 22, First Street, west of the public road. In Fyrish/Gibraltar, Bushdam, Main Street and Downer Street will also be done. In the Kyntire to Borlam NDC, Nazarene Church Street, Seawell Second Cross Street and Seawell Main Street. Just to reiterate, these are done as part of the maintenance programme. There are many more to do under public works, capital, and also under the Ministry of Public Works.

Dr. Mahadeo: The Hon. Minister pre-empted my other question under Maintenance of Bridges for \$68,000,000. Hon. Member, could you please advise?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would also like to reiterate President Ali's commitment to all Guyana that we are going to be investing in every single piece of infrastructure. One of the bridges at Quentin Street, Betsy Ground, East Canje, at Liverpool, at Lesbeholden North, which is the First Street in Field, Joanna South, Second Street, which this is another polder in Blackbush, Yakusari North, First Street, again, this is in Blackbush, Number 2, West Middle Walk in the Number 52 to Number 74 NDC, the Number 73 to Number 74 Sideline, east, Second Street bridge will also be done.

8.57 p.m.

In Mibicuri on the public road, one of the bridges will be done between Lesbeholden and Mibicuri and Second Cross Street Liverpool, as well as Russell Street, Hampshire.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$509,135,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$343,500,000

Minister of Natural Resources [Mr. Bharrat]: Project code – 1401000 – Roads: There is an allocation of \$275 million. As we know this is for capital expenditure meaning new roads. Could the Hon. Minister provide or give us a list of the roads that will be built under this programme in Region 6 taking into consideration that they are all new roads? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that we are going to do, in addition to maintenance on 23 roads under the RDC current programme. We will also be doing an additional 20 new roads in Region 6 in the capital programme. Those roads would be First Cross Street which is commonly referred to as Dr. Narine Street in Block four Tain and Ramballie Street in Edinburgh, this is in the new field end [*inaudible*]. I know that the Hon. Minister, Mr. Vickram Bharrat, has been lobbying a lot for work in that NDC area. There is Ballfield Street in old Chesney, and I know that...

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, did you say old Chesney?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, in old Chesney.

Mr. Chairman: Is there a new Chesney?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes. It is a new scheme.

Mr. Chairman: The new scheme. All right.

Mr. Dharamlall: Chesney is a massive area, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: I know Chesney very, very well.

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to state that all 20 of these streets are going to be done in asphalted concrete, the best quality, so that people can drive very freely now. In Fort Ordance we are going to do Reid Street. In this area the Ministry of Housing and Water will also be doing some road

rehabilitation work in this NDC area as well. We are also going to be doing Yakusari North, Third Street which is in Black Bush Polder; Third Street, Letter Kenny; the northern half of Republic Road; rehabilitation of Grant 1806 Main Access Road in Crabwood Creek, 47 First Street as well in the Good Hope Number 51 NDC and this is the area that the Hon. Member, Mr. Ramjattan, is from. We are also working in Mr. Ramjattan's village. We will also be doing Tarlogie First Street North on the Corentyne; Transformer Street in Alness Village and this is in Hogstye/Landcaster NDC; Back Cross Street, the southern half at West Goed Bananen Land in Canje and Eastern Sideline, South Kildonan will also be done. In Budhan Housing Scheme we will also be doing one of the streets. Platanca is one of the new NDC areas; we are going to be doing the entrance to Light Town; and we are also going to be converting that. East Bank, Berbice, has not really had any type of infrastructural development in the last six or seven years so that is much needed.

In Rose Hall, which is the town, we are going to be doing Third Street North of the public road; in Macedonia/Joppa NDC; Suma Street in Number 36 Village; and in Corriverton, the town closest to the Suriname border, we are going to be doing Queenstown Street. I know that during an outreach by His Excellency, other streets are also currently being done in the town of Corriverton. In Glasgow, New Amsterdam, the Glasgow Nursery School Street will also be done this year, and at Number four Dam at Albion/Chesney, that goes towards the fisheries complex, that will also be done in the Chesney Village, Hon. Minister of Agriculture. The construction of Johanna South, Third Street will also be done during the course of this year.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Hon. Minister. I was listening keenly to hear if you were going to include Number Four Dam because my memories of that Dam are not so nice, walking from the public road to old Chesney in the mud. My mom is from Chesney and the Hon. Member and Shadow Minister of Home Affairs, Ms. Geeta Chandan is just up the Number four Dam watermill. That is where she is from and she would be very happy to know of all these improvements.

Hon. Member: [*Inaudible*]

Mr. Chairman: I am sure she would be because we had loving talks about developments in Chesney. Go ahead, Hon. Minister.

Mr. Dharamlall: As you know, this Government is the government for everyone and we will build every single road in this country, irrespective of who lives there. Indeed, many residents of this area have been accosting us to get this road constructed and I am happy to report that under President Ali, this road will be constructed this year.

Mr. Jaffarally: Under Public Works, project code 1100700, Bridges, I notice there is a provision for bridges in Region 6. Could the Hon. Minister say which community these bridges will be constructed and how the farmers in those communities will benefit?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, I am happy to report the work that we are doing in Region 6. The Number Seven Village footpath bridge will be done; construction of a light-duty bridge at Mibicuri North, Fourth Street; construction of a light-duty bridge at Johanna North and both of these are in Black Bush Polder; a light-duty bridge at Yakusari North, First Street in Black Bush Polder also; in the Number 73 Village and 5274 the largest NDC area in our country and naturally you will see a lot of investments in Region 6 in that NDC area; construction of a bridge at Dr. Bush, Nick and this is continuous to Albion; a light-duty bridge at Don Robin on the Corentyne and finally a light duty bridge at Lonsdale, East Bank Berbice as well.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Hon. Minister. There are some very familiar names like Dr. Bush and Guava Bush. Hon. Members I now put the question that the sum stated for Agency 76, Region 6...

Minister within the Ministry of Public Works [Mr. Indar]: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. Chairman: Sorry. Hon. Member, Mr. Deodat Indar, you may have the floor.

Mr. Indar: Under the same line item, could the Hon. Member say specifically if road lighting is part of any provision in this capital budget that you have put forward? [**Hon. Member:** What is the line item?] It is the same project code, Bridges.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, we are dealing with project code, Roads and it is a very good question if we are now putting lighting along these roadways. Hon. Minister, you may have the floor.

Mr. Dharamlall: I believe the Hon. Minister, Mr. Indar pre-empted also what many of the residents in these areas requested. I can tell you that I have the commitment from the Ministry of

Public Works that on many of these roads, they will also be adequately addressed with streetlights. We are very happy for the Ministry of Public Works.

Mr. Jaffarally: A follow up: Could the Hon. Minister say the streetlights that were removed by the APNU/AFC Government sometime in the community ...

Mr. Chairman: What project code is this under?

Mr. Jaffarally: It is the same project code.

Mr. Chairman: Is it the same project code?

Mr. Jaffarally: Yes. It is Roads.

Mr. Chairman: Did I not hear these were new roads?

Mr. Jaffarally: The roads with light as they said that was connected.

Mr. Chairman: All right. Continue, Hon. Member.

Mr. Jaffarally: I just wanted to ask the Hon. Minister if he will replace those lights in those communities.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, under this same project code, some of these roads, were lighting removed?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is a work in progress and in a discussion with His Excellency, I visited Region 6 with him. I recalled His Excellency also committing. ... We are going to be here for a very many terms, this is only the first of many in the cycle. During the course of this first term, across Region 6 and across the coast of Guyana, would be lighted as well as in many areas of the Hinterland, especially in the town and areas. In the populated Amerindian villages, we would also be putting a lot of streetlights.

Programme: 763 – Public Works – \$343,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$5,076,350,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, I direct your attention to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, a lot of the school buildings in Berbice need a lot of work to be done because works were not done over the last few years. We have \$242 million for Maintenance of Buildings. Could you advise us which buildings in particular will be repaired?

I will ask you the other question under line item 6243, Janitorial and Cleaning Supplies, there is an increase from \$55 million to \$70 million. Would this cater to the age in which we are living, that is, with the Coronavirus disease (COVID- 19) pandemic?

Mr. Dharamlall: I would like to report that out of the 129 school buildings in Region 6, we will be spending this massive amount of \$242 million, not just on maintenance of 103 school buildings, but also the impact that \$242 million will have in some of these small communities. The policy of our Government is to make sure that small contractors do maintenance work within the communities where these schools are located, which will also generate village economies which will contribute to the expansion of the employment database that we are currently driving. It is much more Hon. Member, than just maintaining a school but it also has to do with growing the village economy around these schools.

The sum of \$70 million would be also spent and the Minister of Education has established recently an inspectorate division or has gotten an inspectorate division to really work and monitor the performance, as well as the infrastructure of the regional education system.

9.12 p.m.

I would like to report to the Hon. Minister as well, that a lot of what is budgeted here for cleaning and janitorial supplies would be going towards the schools to make sure that the schools are at the best sanitary conditions, and also, our teachers and other officials of these schools would be provided with the best sanitary conditions.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$5,076,350,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$264,000,000

Mr. Indar: Project code 1203900 – Buildings – Education, there is a sum of \$184 million, could the Hon. Minister say which of these schools and dormitories would the \$184 million be spent on?

Mr. Dharamlall: I just reported that we would be doing extensive maintenance work on 103 of the 129 school buildings in Region 6. We have an additional allocation of \$184 million, and we would do construction of handwashing facilities in 16 nursery school compounds, and I have a list of those nursery schools which I could lay over to you, Hon. Member, with your permission, Mr. Chairman.

Rehabilitation of the Vrymans Erven Secondary School, extension of the Sheet Anchor Nursery School, extension and renovation of the Home Economics Department and building at Manchester Secondary School, also securing the science lab at Manchester Secondary School. This is very important, the rehabilitation of a jetty at Baracara landing; that landing gives us access to both the school and health facility, this is in the Canje Creek; Number 56 Primary School would also be rehabilitated, we would do extensive rehabilitation work at the Springlands dormitory, and a lot of Amerindian students are housed at the Springlands dormitory. We would also be doing something relatively different, and I think that this is one of the things that is actually going to drive our education system now, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, we would be building shade houses at nine secondary schools in the region, and this is practically all of the secondary schools, possibly, except New Amsterdam Multilateral Secondary School (NAMS), that is the school of our Hon. Minister of Natural Resources. The Princetown Nursery School and Courantyne Nursery School would also be extended; Albion Front Nursery School would be extended, library, and one of the things I know that the Minister of Education has been sharing quite a lot of library type books in many areas, I delivered some of those in Region 2; an extension of the library at Manchester Secondary would also be done; and the Lochaber Primary. At New Amsterdam Multilateral Secondary School, there would be construction of broilers pens where they are also going to be involved in some livestock production– in this case, broilers. We would also be building some chicken pens in other secondary schools in Region 6; construction of a new block as well, at one of the more popular primary schools in the region, and that is the St. Theresa Primary School in New Amsterdam. Hon. Minister and Mr. Chairman, those are the areas.

Mr. Bharrat: Project code 2402000 – Land and Water Transport, there is a provision of \$35,000,000, could the Hon. Minister say whether this would cater for transportation of school children in the Orealla/Siparuta area, in the Canje Creek area, and also up the Berbice river, or if there are already systems in place by the region to transport children from these areas, who are attending schools on the coast? [**An. Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible)*]

Mr. Dharamlall: My apologies, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: You may go ahead, Hon. Member, and ignore that comment. A President's College boy who has a lot of comprehension.

Mr. Dharamlall: We are indeed buying two buses, and this would complement the fleet that we have in Region 6, both for land and water transport; a 30 seater bus, and this is a proper 30 seater bus, it is not one of those buses that would be smoking and... [**An. Hon. Member:** *(Inaudible)* David Granger.] No, it is not a David Granger bus, but it would be a proper 30-seater bus to transport some of our school children. I wish to report, I have a note here from the Regional Democratic Council (RDC), that one of those buses that was formerly emblazoned with David Granger, is actually 20 years old, and that is why it is not working, and many times, students were left on the road waiting on the David Granger bus. I am happy to report that we are actually providing a new 30-seater bus. We would also be buying another 15-seater bus as well, to complement the transportation requirements of our students. In the riverine areas, in Canje Creek as well as in the Berbice River, we are providing fuel to the village boats, so that those children could get to school on time.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, very much, Hon. Minister. It was quite refreshing to hear what is happening, especially in the Berbice River area.

Programme: 764 – Education Delivery – \$264,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$2,746,877,000

Dr. Mahadeo: I would like to direct the Minister's attention to line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, in 2021, a lot of moneys was spent in Region 6 doing works in the primary health care facilities to ensure that they are more patient friendly. We have here, \$130 million, could you advise on what facilities this money would be spent on?

Mr. Dharamlall: In this entire health programme, under the current programme in Region 6, we have actually increased the entire budget for health in Region 6 in the current programme, I would speak about the capital shortly, by over \$400 million in Region 6. We are now spending in the current programme, \$2.746 billion in Region 6. Maintenance work would be done at the New Amsterdam Hospital, Skeldon Hospital, Port Maurant Hospital and Ophthalmology Centre, Mibicuri Cottage Hospital, the National Psychiatric Hospital... I was looking across there, New Amsterdam Family Health Center, Skeldon Estate Health Center, Eversham Health Center, Lan-Liv-Man Health Centre in Liverpool, Angoy's Avenue Health Centre, Bush Lot Health Centre, Port Maurant Health Centre, and we would be doing Williamsburg Number 64. I could lay over to the Hon. Member. All of the health centers and hospitals would receive maintenance funds.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$2,746,877,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$247,000,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Project code 1204000 – Buildings – Health, Hon. Minister, I would like to remind you that when the Member of Parliament (MP) from the Opposition from Region 6 spoke, he said that we need to build health centres in Region 6, and none has been built. Could you advise whether any health centres would be built under this line item and where would they be located?

Mr. Dharamlall: Hon. Member, indeed, it is our commitment to upgrade the access to health facilities in all of our regions. In Region 6, in this particular case, in the Fort Ordinance housing scheme, we would be constructing a new health centre.

Programme: 765 – Health Services – \$247,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, on your behalf and my own, let me thank the Minister and his team from Region 6 for taking us through the estimates for that agency. We would have given the Minister and his team from Region 7 an opportunity to get in place. Hon. Members, we are starting this head at 9.26 p.m.

9.27 p.m.

Agency: 77 Region 7: Cuyuni/Mazaruni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 771 Regional Administration and Finance – \$366,993,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, Ms. Teixeira. Please put on your microphone.

Ms. Teixeira: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. At line item 6255, Maintenance of Other Infrastructure, could the Hon. Minister guide us on what \$38,850 million will be spent on? May I also say congratulations to the Hon. Minister and the region for having been able to have an increase in its budget from \$1.6 billion to \$1.8 billion.

Mr. Dharamlall: The increase in the budget had a lot to do with the Hon. Minister Teixeira, who had been working assiduously in Region 7 over the last few years. I wish to report, and this would be cross-cutting in all of the hinterland regions, that every village in the hinterland regions - 1, 7, 8 and 9 will get some sort of investment from *Budget 2022*.

In this case, the lighting system at Isseneru and Kamarang will both benefit from maintenance; the water system at Kartabu Landing, the landing at Imbaimadai, that has been treacherous for quite a long time, and it will receive some maintenance. The Phillipai Landing, sometime last year, I climbed that Landing and it was extremely steep; the water system at Itabali would also be maintained; 72 Miles - the community centre ground, we will be doing maintenance work there; the Isseneru Landing, this is the second project that we will be doing in Isseneru; at Batavia in the Lower Mazaruni, the Batavia Landing will also be maintained; all government compounds in Upper Mazaruni, Lower Mazaruni and Middle Mazaruni we will be doing extensive maintenance work.

Ms. Parag: Line item 6302 – Training (including Scholarships): I see that *Budget 2022* has allocated \$430,000 which is a good increase from the \$200,000 from 2020. Could I ask the Hon. Minister what training will be offered to Region 7?

Mr. Dharamlall: As part of us expanding government services, we also have to upgrade the competence of many of our Government officials in these regions. In the areas of procurement management, there will be training in the use of some computer software and some programmes especially, to ensure that we are able to provide better services. The Public Service Ministry (PSM) is also working quite a lot with building virtual teams in our regions. This will also be covered here. As an accountable Government, we have to make sure people are all trained. One of the things that we also have to do very quickly too, is to provide leadership development training. This will be across many other regions. Often times, I get question on, if we are able to deliver this massive budget. We are also providing, in conjunction with the PSM, project management training to individuals of Region 7.

Programme: 771 Regional Administration and Finance – \$366,993,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$35,500,000

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Minister say under project code 1204300, Buildings, which programmes would the region pay attention to with the \$26 million allocated?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that we would be doing Bartica central almost, the multi-purpose building at Byderabo. That building would be rehabilitated. In Kamarang in the Upper Mazaruni, the Amerindian Hostel is going to be extended. Of course, Kamarang is like the capital of the Upper Mazaruni. Almost everyone who passes through from other villages, end up at the Amerindian Hostel. We are putting resources to expand the Amerindian Hostel and finally, Hon. Minister Teixeira, the living quarters of some members of the mechanical engineer based in Bartica.

Programme: 771 – Regional Administration and Finance - \$35,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates

Current Expenditure

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$204,139,000

Ms. Teixeira: Could I ask the Hon. Minister questions on the line items 6251 – Maintenance of Roads, 6252 – Maintenance of Bridges and 6253 – Maintenance of Drainage and Irrigation Works. I know this is a long list but could he give us the highlights because I know many communities are waiting to hear if roads or bridges are in this budget for Region 7?

Mr. Dharamlall: Indeed, for maintenance of roads in Region 7, many years ago, we had started the road between Kamarang and Waramadong. We are putting more moneys again to further enhance that road between Kamarang and Waramadong, which is in the Upper Mazaruni. We have also begun extending to other Amerindian villages in the Upper Mazaruni from Kako to Waramadong. That road will be maintained, or it has to be further maintained. From Mora Point in Bartica, this is one of the areas that the road is in a terrible state. We have to do some work on it. Different sections of Bamford Point also in Bartica. The Bartica/Potaro Road itself we have to do some extensive maintenance. Many of these roads that I am referring to, if not farming a lot of mining and logging logistics take place along these roads.

The West Bartica Secondary School Road would also be maintained. Eighth Street in Bartica, Caribisi Hill Road would be maintained, Byderabdo Front Road and the Byderabo Back Road or Four Miles Nursery School Road will also receive maintenance. The Hostel Road at Seventh Avenue and First Street will also be maintained and a road at Mongrippa Hill. Those are the roads that are going to be maintained.

One of the bridges in Waramadong, one in Iteringbang which is way on the other side, in Kako maintenance at Agatash as well. Only last year we completed the road into Agatash, and we are doing a bridge as well along the main access road in Agatash.

In terms of Drainage and Irrigation (D&I), the Kukui River between Phillipai and Jawalla, when the water is low in that area it is very difficult to traverse. The Kamarang River itself in some areas we have to do some cleaning of the Ataro River, Wax Creek, maintenance of drains in West Indian Housing Scheme in Bartica, in Four Miles Housing Scheme also in Bartica, in One to Five Miles as well in Bartica, so practically the entire Bartica, drains around the municipal area in Bartica,

Three Miles Creek will also be maintained, as well as Mongrippa Creek and the river defence around Bartica. I want to state, Mr. Chairman, before I leave on this issue that in the Amerindian areas, we are actually going to give contracts to our Amerindian brothers and sisters within those villages, to do a lot of this work. Instead of bringing contractors from outside of the region or outside of the village as was done previously, work within Amerindian villages would be done by Amerindian people.

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$204,139,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme 772: Public Works - \$102,000,000

Ms. Teixeira: Could the Hon. Minister tell us, under project code 1401100, Roads, which are the roads that have been identified for this expenditure of \$56 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: The upgrade of the Kako to Kamarang road – that is going to be converted into compact laterite so you could actually drive on that road at some point in time during the course of this year. Kamarang to Waramadong – we are actually going to be linking now. You could drive before the end of this year from Kako to Waramadong. I see my Colleague, Mr. Lee Williams is probably getting very excited there. There is a long journey between the airstrip in the village in Arau. I know my Colleague, Minister Campbell-Sukhai slept one night at the airstrip just because of that long walk, having reached out very late. The Arau Airstrip Road will also be rehabilitated. There is a little village called Amococopai which is attached to Phillipai. We are also going to convert that to compact laterite road.

There is something I think is the highpoint of this budget in Region 7 in education. The children of Jawalla that live across the Kukui River they have to walk over on a pontoon bridge that they pull with a rope – a floating bridge to get into the Jawalla Primary School or the Nursery School. I know that the former Minister of State, I think, Ms. Hastings-Williams used to be the Headmistress (HM) at Jawalla Primary School for a number of years, she still is, held up that Hon. Member held up that position whilst she sat in the National Assembly as a Government Minister

and possibly still. No one could have been promoted. I recall one young man acted as the Headmaster and has been the Deputy, unable to be promoted for many years in Jawalla.

9.42 p.m.

We are going to build a 160 feet (ft) bridge across the Kukui River for the children of Jawalla. Minister Teixeira I would like to report that. [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] I beg your pardon? [**An Hon. Member:** *[Inaudible]*] The Attorney General (AG) sent me the picture, but I have actually walked the bridge before. It has been on the cards. We had budgeted for it already and the construction of a culvert at 4th Avenue Bartica. This is really the high point of the Region 7 education budget – that bridge for school children.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, very much, Hon. Minister. I was just wondering how the Attorney General is familiar with that area. I do not know if there is court in that area.

Programme: 772 – Public Works – \$102,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$1,550,018,000

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$1,550,018,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$257,965,000

Mr. Williams: Project code 1204100 – Buildings – Education: Could the Minister do a breakdown of this sum? Which schools will be built or be done with it?

Mr. Dharamlall: In Region 7, we are going to be building a new school at the Kaikan Amerindian Village. The current building is dilapidated and has possibly been there since the village has been inhabited. The building is extremely old and unsafe. We will be doing massive extension and rehabilitation at the Jawalla Nursery School. We will be constructing a primary school at Eteringbang, Hon. Minister Teixeira and Mr. Chairman. We will be doing extension and

rehabilitation at the Precious Gems Nursery School in 2nd Avenue Bartica. An extension at the Falmouth Primary School in the Lower Mazaruni and rehabilitation of the Kubenang Primary School in the Upper Mazaruni. That is the village sandwiched between Kako and Jawalla. In Paruima, we will also be doing some sanitary facilities for the schools in Paruima where the Hon. Lee Williams, my Colleague, is from.

Mr. Williams: Project code 2800600 – Water Supply: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown as to which area will be benefitting from this sum?

Mr. Dharamlall: A well is supposed to be constructed by the Ministry of Housing and Water in Waramadong so there is going to be an installation of a water system in Waramadong. Secondly, at Kangaruma in the Middle Mazaruni we will be spending \$10 million on the installation of a water system as well.

Programme: 773 – Education Delivery – \$257,965,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$967,927,000

Ms. Teixeira: Under line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: Could the Hon. Minister say which health buildings are included in the \$51 million allocated here?

Mr. Dharamlall: The Kamarang Extension of Physician (Medex) quarters and the doctors' quarters too at Kamarang. The Batavia Health Post, Wineperu Health Post, Kako Health Post, Isseneru doctors' quarters, Karau Health Post, 72 Miles Health Post, Wyling Health Post, Puruni Health Post, the Bartica Hospital and the Kamarang Hospital. Those would be the buildings under consideration for maintenance during the course of this year.

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$967,927,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$174,000,000

Mr. Williams: Project code 1204200 – Buildings – Health: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of this \$121 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: Yes, Mr. Chairman. A shade house will be constructed in Kamarang. We will be buying two brush cutters, four spray cans, four mist blowers, one meat slicer, one electric smoker and four beeswax foundation rollers under this line item.

Mr. Chairman: We were at Programme: 774 – Health Services.

Mr. Dharamlall: Mr. Chairman, you said Agriculture.

Mr. Chairman: My apologies if I said Agriculture. We were at Programme: 774.

Mr. Williams: Mr. Chairman, let me repeat my question. Project code 1204200 – Buildings – Health: Could the Hon. Minister give a breakdown of this sum of \$121 million?

Mr. Dharamlall: In addition to three rollovers, that is, the maternal and child health (MCH) clinic in Bartica, the Kamarang District Hospital extension and a duplex living quarter in Bartica. We will also be constructing a new, and this time a proper drug bond. Not like the one in Sussex Street. Living quarters for the health worker and a visiting doctor at Puruni. A lot of people traverse this road, and we would like to upgrade the facilities that we have there. Bartica is expected to have a new three-story hospital that has to be constructed.

We have to relocate the mortuary to another area to facilitate the construction of the new hospital in Bartica. The Imbaimadai Health Post will be rehabilitated and extended. The Kaikan Health Post will be rehabilitated and extended. In Eteringbang there is no accommodation for a doctor. This is a transient area with many people crossing the border. We will be constructing living quarters for the medical personnel there. They actually live in the health facility right now. In Paruima as well, the last Government Medical Officer (GMO) we had in Paruima was from that village but since they left this village has been without any proper service from the level of a doctor. As such, we will be constructing an accommodation, living quarters for a doctor to be stationed in Paruima in the Upper Mazaruni. In Waramadong too, the health post will be rehabilitated and extended. Finally, we will be constructing at Issano a living quarter for a doctor to be stationed whether permanently or intermittently in Issano.

Programme: 774 – Health Services – \$174,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 775 – Agriculture – \$5,000,000

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, I think you would have made reference to that head already.

Programme: 775 – Agriculture – \$5,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us thank the Hon. Minister and staff of Region 7 for taking us through that head. As the Minister gets his team from Region 8 together, let us turn to page 554.

9.57 p.m.

Agency: 78 Region 8: Potaro/Siparuni

Current Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$177,414,000

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$177,414,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,250,000

Programme: 781 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$13,250,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$189,620,000

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$189,620,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$80,000,000

Minister of Amerindian Affairs [Ms. Campbell-Sukhai]: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Could the Hon. Minister share with this House the capital allocation for Programme 782, Public Works, and various infrastructural works that would be done? Could the Hon. Minister also detail, under this heading, the bridges that would be done at project code 1100800, Bridges and project code 1401200, Roads? Thank you.

Mr. Dharamlall: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In addition to all the bridges that we had done last year, we would also be doing a bridge in Kaibarupai. This is estimated to be \$25 million. At Micobie, another both of these bridges will be concrete and timber, previously, it - used to be timber bridges- this would be approximately \$12.5 million. A lot of these works will be done by residents of these areas.

Regarding roads; the road - linking Kurukabaru and Itabac in the North Pakaraima Mountains, approximately 20 kilometres – \$14 million. Mr. Chairman, I know when I was a boy, you used to be in those areas, and those were in the bad days, I mean, like the treacherous days. Now, we could actually drive between these villages - Mr. Chairman, use to walk those days too. Between Kato and Kurukabaru approximately 15 kilometres, we would be providing \$12 million for the upgrading or the rehabilitation of that road link. Between Kopinang and Kamana, we would also be providing a total of \$14 million. It is a total of \$40 million. I would like to report too, that through the Ministry of Public Works, last year \$100 million were expended on the road rehabilitation in the North Pakaraima Mountains and an additional sum in 2022 from the Ministry of Public Works is also allocated for the road rehabilitation in the area. The RDC is complimenting the Ministry of Public Works in the entire road network in the North Pakaraima Mountains.

Programme: 782 – Public Works – \$80,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$1,210,070,000

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$1,210,070,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$269,700,000

Mr. Bharrat: The Kato Secondary School built under the People’s Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C) Administration is the premier secondary school in the North Pakaraima Mountains, could the Hon. Minister say if there is any provision in this Budget for works on that secondary school and if so, what works will be done?

Mr. Dharamlall: We have the construction of two dorms at the Kato Secondary School Complex, on the second phase; we are also doing an ‘L’ shape nursery school at Monkey Mountain; we are doing a primary school at Kanapang, and I know the Hon. Minister, Ms. Campbell-Sukhai has been pushing for this for a long time; and a nursery school at Kurukabaru, we would be doing this year as well.

Programme: 783 – Education Delivery – \$269,700,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$428,473,000

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$428,473,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$194,620,000

Ms. Campbell-Sukhai: An allocation of \$105,200,000 has been allocated under the Health Services. Could the Hon. Minister, provide the details on what this expenditure would entail for Region 8?

Mr. Dharamlall: They are some retention sums as well as a rollover. The maternal waiting home at Kato is one of the rollovers that we intend to complete; a health post and staff quarters at Sandhill village; a health post and staff quarters at Waipa; a satellite as well; construction of a maternal and child health head office and vaccines storage in Mahdia; the rehabilitation of the Mahdia District Hospital into a regional hospital in Mahdia - this is one of the major issues; an installation of a

central oxygen supply and medical air system at the Mahdia Hospital; and rehabilitation of the nurses' hostel at Mahdia. Those would be the buildings that we are working on this year. Also, at Kaibarupai, we would be doing an extension at Kaibarupai health post of a labour and delivery room, specifically. That is, of course, to treat our mothers with some dignity in these facilities. Similarly, at the Maikwak health post, we would be doing the same thing; a labour and delivery room.

Programme: 784 – Health Services – \$194,620,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$25,869,000

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$25,869,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$5,000,000

Programme: 785 – Agriculture – \$5,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

10.12 p.m.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us thank the Hon. Minister and his staff of Region 8 for taking us through their agency. Let us give the Hon. Minister a few moments to take his seat. Hon. Members, I invite you all to turn to page 568.

Agency: 79 Region 9: Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo

Current Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$310,216,000

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$310,216,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$44,100,000

Programme: 791 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$44,100,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$79,128,000

Mr. Charlie: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Line item 6242 – Maintenance of Buildings: The budgetary allocation is \$15 million. Could the Hon. Minister disaggregate to the Committee as to which buildings under this Programme will undergo maintenance?

Mr. Dharamlall: The buildings will be the veterinary officer and programme managers quarters in Lethem; the agricultural research building in Saint Ignatius; the foot and mouth drive through dip at three locations: in Shulinab area, Annai and Kurupukari; the plant nurseries at Annai, Saint Ignatius and Karasabai; the crops and livestock extension officers building in Saint Ignatius; the slaughterhouses in Aishalton, Sand Creek and Annai - we had recently built a slaughterhouse in Karasabai - and a soil and plant pathology laboratory at the Regional Research Station in Saint Ignatius.

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$79,128,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$41,200,000

Programme: 792 – Agriculture – \$41,200,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$255,492,000

Mr. Charlie: I have three questions. I will put them in one. Line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, there is an allocation of \$44 million; line item 6251, Maintenance of Roads – \$70

million and line item 6252, Maintenance of Bridges – \$45 million. Could the Hon. Minister respectively disaggregate to this Committee and the nation at large as to what constitutes the proposed allocations? Could he give us what these allocations entail?

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Minister, you have three line items to address in the one question.

Mr. Dharamlall: The allocations are for a living quarter for a sub-treasury officer – Hon. Minister of Finance – in Lethem; the regional accounting unit; a multi-purpose building that is close to the Guyana/Lethem border and the Amerindian Conference Hall in Lethem as well. Those are the buildings. In terms of bridges, there will be repairs to the Aruwau Bridge in Karaudarnau, the Alligator Bridge in Tiger Pond and the Karrau Bridge in Jauri. We also have bridges in the South Pakaraimas like I said. If the Hon. Member would like more details, then I could lay this over to him.

Regrading roads: we are doing repairs to the two kilometres of road at Karasabai; we will be maintaining the Woweta internal road also or the road at Massara, which suffered some serious damage in the last flood; the road from Shulinab to Potarinau which has not been looked at for a long time; Kwatana road as well as the road in Ruperti. Again, I could provide the details to the Hon. Member if he so desires. This is also in addition to all of the road maintenance work that would be done by the Ministry of Natural Resources in Region 9 as well as the Ministry of Public Works. It is a few hundreds of kilometres of roads that will be maintained.

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$255,492,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$235,000,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code – 1401300 – Roads: The allocation is \$84 million. Could the Hon. Minister tell the Committee as to which roads this provision will take care of in Region 9?

Mr. Dharamlall: Again, I want to caveat this by saying that the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Natural Resources would be doing the majority of the road construction in Region 9, in addition to bridges. To the regional budget specifically, we would be raising, grading, and

compacting sections of the road from Karaudarnau to Achiwuib which has been under some tenuous conditions of recent. A section of the road in Lethem central will be converted into asphaltic concrete - this is on the right bank of the Tabatinga Creek. We have additional roads under the Ministry of Public Works to be done in Lethem township as well during the course of this year, the upgrading of the internal road in Katunarib and the upgrading of a section of the Saint Ignatius Jauri farm road.

Regrading bridges, to pre-empt the Hon. Member, we will be constructing a concrete bridge at Arimishu Creek, a concrete and wooden bridge at Tiger Creek in Tiger Pond that actually collapsed and a concrete and wooden bridge at Pai Pang as well.

10.27 p.m.

These two areas are in South Pakaraimas. In Deep South, Rupununi, there will be a concrete and wooden bridge at Kokerite Creek. Mr. Chairman, in the savannahs, sometimes one will probably see a flat savannah in the dry season but in the rainy season some areas would have deep ponds, so we have to build some culverts in these areas. In Achiwuib, we would be building a culvert. These are solid cast concrete culverts that will be in Sawariwau and along the Saint Ignatius farm road as well.

Mr. Charlie: Mr. Chairman, I want to say thanks on behalf of the people of Region 9 to the Minister and the other ministries. Why? Under the previous Coalition Government, our road infrastructure and the bridges were neglected.

Mr. Chairman: What is the question, Hon. Member?

Mr. Charlie: I thank this Government on behalf of the people for addressing this through this intervention.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you.

Programme: 793 – Public Works – \$235,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$1,831,601,000

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$1,831,601 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$227,000,000

Mr. Charlie: Project code 1204700 – Buildings - Education: The budgetary allocation is \$191,500,00. This is the provision for schools, dormitories and sanitary facilities. Could the Hon. Minister tell this Committee where the construction of the schools, dormitories and sanitary facilities will be undertaken – which villages?

Mr. Dharamlall: It is indeed true that we are doing a lot of investment in Region 9 which has been neglected for a long time in the last few years. As a matter of fact, the budget for Region 9 has increased to \$4,132,000,000 this year. Mr. Chairman, we will be constructing a female dormitory at the Sand Creek Secondary School complex in South Central Rupununi. There is no separate dormitory for females so we will be constructing one. We will be extending the Aishalton Secondary School dormitory as well. We will be constructing a building to accommodate the Cyril Potter College of Education (CPCE) trainee teachers because many of them have to come out of villages to Lethem and they do not have any proper facility or accommodation. We are going to rehabilitate the Annai Secondary School's main building. We are taking education to the cutting edge in the Rupununi. For the Aishalton, Annai and Sand Creek dormitories, we will be upgrading their sanitary facilities.

For the first time Hon. Minister of Education there is a satellite as soon as one climbs the Kaieteur mountain which is an annexe to Tipuru. For the first time, we will be constructing a primary school annexe. Those children have to traverse across mountains every day to get to the Tipuru Primary School. We will also be rehabilitating the Para Bara Primary School. Of course, this is one of our campaign promises. This is way in the Deep South. The Shea, Karaudarnau, Aishalton and Achiwuib primary schools will all get upgraded sanitary facilities.

Programme: 794 – Education Delivery – \$227,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Service – \$914,572,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Hon. Minister, for line item 6242, Maintenance of Buildings, there is \$58 million. Could you advise which facility would benefit?

Mr. Dharamlall: There would be repairs and some level of upgrade to the Sawariwau Health Post – from a health post to a health centre. The Surama Health Post will be converted into a health centre. The Karaudarnau Health Post will be converted into a health centre. The Rewa Health Post – this is in the Rupununi River – would also be converted into a health centre. The Kwatamang Health Post will also be converted into a health centre. There is a little village which is a satellite of Potarinau, and it is called Baitun. We will do some rehabilitation or repair work on the health post in Baitun.

Programme: 795 – Health Service – \$914,572,000 agree to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 795 – Health Service – \$194,000,000

Dr. Mahadeo: Mr. Chairman, \$194 million will be spent on Capital Expenditure for health services in Region 9. Could the Minister please advise of the buildings that will be fixed; where the ambulances, vehicles and boat engines will be placed; and from the \$40 million for the purchase of furniture and equipment, do we have equipment there to cater for the facilities that are being currently constructed in Region 9, in Aishalton?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that we are going to be buying a new ambulance for the Lethem Regional Hospital. That will also add to the services that we are providing currently. We will be buying an all-terrain vehicle (ATV) as well to do more outreach. We will be buying a boat and engine. It will be a 40 horsepower (hp) aluminium boat which would be used in the riverain areas, especially for the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) and other specialists' outreaches.

Regarding the equipment, Dr. Mahadeo can better advise me, but I could share with you some of the types of equipment that we are going to buy. There will be a paediatric ventilator and this will

be for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Lethem Regional Hospital. There are some bedside or cardiac monitors. We will be buying an anaesthesia machine for the Lethem Regional Hospital. This is part of the enhanced surgery services at the Lethem Regional Hospital. There will be a portable dental unit to move around in the communities. There will be orthopaedic fracture beds, medication trolleys, nebulisation machines, crash carts, incubators, spinal boards, a laryngoscope set with blades for paediatrics and a laryngoscope set with blades for adults. We would also be buying an electrocardiogram (ECG) machine and an electroencephalogram (EEG) for the Lethem Regional Hospital. There will be a mechanical ventilator. We would be buying also defibrillators, suction machines, a mobile x-ray unit, an infrared lamp, a Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS) machine and a host of other medical equipment for the medical facilities in Region 9.

I would also like to report to you, Mr. Chairman, that we would be constructing an Infectious Diseases Centre at the Lethem Regional Hospital. We would be constructing a health post for the first time. Last year, we constructed a school in a satellite village of Taushida in the South Pakaraima Mountains, away from Karasabai at Kakshibai. For the first time, Mr. Chairman, it is going to have its own health post. Persons traverse miles just to get to school and to get to a medical facility on a daily basis. We will be doing a complete rehabilitation of the Annai Cottage Hospital, the Para Bara Health Post and the Karasabai Health Centre. There will be complete rehabilitations and these will also elevate the services that we provide. There will be complete rehabilitation at the Kwatamang Health Post in the North Rupununi. There will also be an audio room and speech and language therapy room in the Lethem Regional Hospital. There will be total rehabilitation of the Achiwuib Health Post. Thank you very much.

Programme: 795 – Health Service – \$194,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let us thank the Hon. Minister and staff of Region 9 for taking us through those Estimates and his agency. Hon. Members, let us invite the Minister to get his staff of Region 10 to join us and take us through Agency 80.

10.42 p.m.

Agency: 80 Region 10: Upper Demerara/ Upper Berbice

Current Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$272,811,000

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$272,811,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,500,000

Programme: 801 – Regional Administration and Finance – \$8,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works– \$219,666,000

Programme: 802 – Public Works– \$219,666,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 802 – Public Works– \$132,500,000

Programme: 802 – Public Works – \$132,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery– \$3,080,714, 000

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$3,080,714, 000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery– \$382,400,000

Minister of Public Works [Bishop Edghill]: Project code 1205200 – Buildings – Education: I am sure the people of Region 10 would want to know how the increase of \$611 million on the programme, overall, would impact the delivery of education. Could the Hon. Minister tell us what we would be doing with the \$316 million plus dollars that would be spent on Educational Delivery – Buildings in Region 10?

Mr. Dharamlall: I am happy to report that for The Christiansburg Primary School we have an outstanding retention for \$13 million that we would have to pay. The Christiansburg Primary School has about 249 students. We have begun construction of a new school at Bamia, a Grade B Primary School, and we have budgeted \$177.5 million this year. We also have an extension to the furniture making laboratory at the Linden Foundation Secondary in Amelia's Ward, and also an extension of the agricultural laboratory at the Linden Foundation Secondary. One is for \$30 million, and one is for \$35 million. There would be the construction of teachers' quarters along the Mabura Road in 58 Miles Village. This has been an issue for a long time. We would be spending about \$32 million for the construction of the teachers' quarters to accommodate at least four non-resident teachers. We generally do not have teachers from these communities. We also have a rehabilitation of the school building in Muritaro, Demerara River and, again, that building would be hosting 52 students and five teachers. The current building was damaged in the 2021 flood and so this rehabilitation is going to practically be a new school constructed in Muritaro, an Amerindian village. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Programme: 803 – Education Delivery – \$382,400,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$1,020,996,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$1, 020,996,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$175,500,000

Programme: 804 – Health Services – \$175,500,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Current Expenditure

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$35,502,000

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$35,502,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Capital Expenditure

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$40,000,000

Programme: 805 – Agriculture – \$40,000,000 agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Estimates.

Mr. Chairman: Hon. Members, let me thank the Minister and his team from Region 10 for taking us through that agency. Hon. Members, we have now concluded our consideration of the estimates that were allocated for today. Let the Assembly resume. [*Applause*]

Assembly resumed

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we have now concluded our business for today.

ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED:

“That the Assembly do now adjourn to 10.00 a.m., Thursday 10th February, 2022.”

[*Prime Minister*]

Prime Minister [Brigadier (Ret'd) Phillips]: I move the adjournment of the Assembly to 10.00 a.m. on Thursday 10th February, 2022.

Motion put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the Assembly stands adjourned to 10.00 a.m. on Thursday, 10th February, 2022.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.56 p.m.